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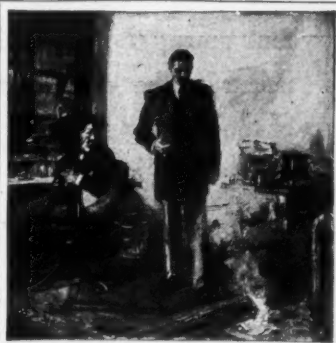
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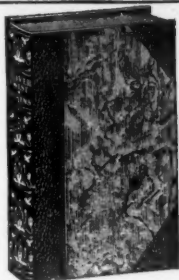
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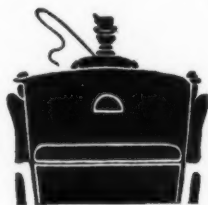
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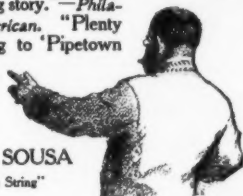
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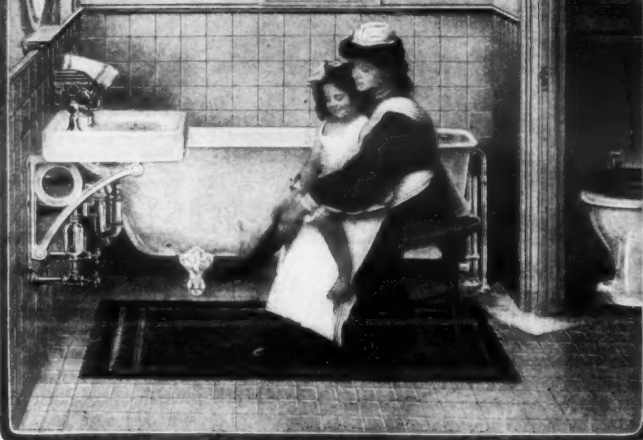
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# AINSLEE'S

THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS

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DECEMBER, 1905.

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## TRADE AND THE TREMONTS



**T**HERE is something so ugly about patent overshoes," sighed Mrs. Tremont. "Not at all, not at all, my dear," replied her husband. "A very becoming little device, I am told."

"About the sound of it, I mean. About the idea. A man who made his money in patent overshoes!"

"Pooh! pooh!" said Mr. Tremont, moving his shoulders rapidly backward and forward, as if they had been wings. "After all, it was not he, but his father——"

"No, Ferdinand, you told me yourself, the first time he dined with us, that he had added something very clever to the original patent. You said——" But her husband cut short her accuracy.

"Oh, possibly, possibly," he said, with the manner of yielding the merely trifling; "but that was some years ago. You must understand that now he is an important person. He is president of the Memorial Bank, a director in the N. Y. & T., a man of position——commercial position, of course, but still——" At the word "commercial" Mr. Tre-

mont's voice took on a tone of apology often assumed by men who know nothing of business. "And I think you will admit that he appears well. We mentioned it the last time he dined here."

"He wanted rye whisky," said Mrs. Tremont, "and I remember there was nothing in the house but Scotch."

"He goes everywhere, I understand."

"I think that can hardly be, dear," his wife answered, gently, and after a moment, as if in hope that the syllables might now fall more agreeably upon her ears, she repeated aloud: "Patent overshoes!"

"My dear Sarah, you must realize that family is not regarded as it used to be."

"I have heard you say that, Ferdinand. It is said only by people of birth; the others are just as envious as ever." And her husband could not help smiling at her wisdom.

His respect for his own family was, indeed, very profound. It was not snobbish or obtrusive or offensive; you might have known him a long time without discovering it, for it was, quite simply, the fundamental postulate of his existence. If he were not important on the score of birth, on what score was he important? There was one answer to

that question he never thought of making.

He came near to fulfilling the ideal of an American aristocrat, if there be such a thing. His parents had left him but little money, with a place near enough to New York to make taxes a serious matter. During his early youth he had been a distinguished figure in the society of the time. He had engaged in no mercantile pursuit, but had dabbled in literature; his books, "Personal Gossip of the Rebellion"—he was an arrant Northerner—and "Northward from the Battery"—an account of the trend of fashion in residences—are to be found in most libraries of the period. He had married—not very young—a lady perfectly eligible, well-born and the reputed possessor of twenty thousand a year. As a matter of fact, the income was only fifteen thousand, but the match was none the less an excellent one, and had turned out most happily.

Mr. and Mrs. Tremont lived on the old Tremont Manor, round which the village of Tremontborough had already begun to grow up. For the first year or so they came to town for a few months every winter, but the custom very soon ceased. Indeed, owing to the shrinking of values and the rising of taxes, the Tremonts, who had settled in the country as large landed proprietors, found themselves, at the opening of this story, obliged to stay there as rather hard-up country folk. New York life meantime moved on rapidly without them.

Nevertheless, when their daughter reached the age of eighteen they decided to take a house in town and bring her "out." Mr. Tremont, who had been born in a fashionable block in Second Avenue, could not have faced the notion of a house above Twenty-third Street. They took one below Fourteenth Street, and immediately sent out cards for a tea—"Mr. and Mrs. Tremont, Miss Tremont." It was the greatest satisfaction to them that they were the oldest branch of the family.

A great many people had come to their tea—people with high-sounding

old names; flowers had poured in from old friends of the family. When at length, perfectly exhausted, the Tremonts once more had their house to themselves, they were thoroughly satisfied with the success of their party, and had not an idea that not one single person of the slightest social importance had been present. How could they imagine that they, who twenty years before had commanded as a natural right the most exclusive circle, were utterly ignorant of the names that governed the present hour?

Least of all did little Mary Tremont herself suspect this. She had been very quietly brought up in the country, with governesses who taught her not much of anything and nothing of the world. She had absorbed as much of her father's point of view as her very sweet nature would allow, and was no more likely to doubt the importance of being a Tremont than the heir apparent is likely to make light of monarchy. Her country life had not only given her a strong body, but an unusual power to enjoy. To stand beside her mother from four until seven in her long white dress, with her arms full of flowers, to be kissed by old dowagers and complimented by elderly beaux, this, far from striking her as an intolerable bore, thrilled and excited her with the delicious sense that she was at last grown up.

The evening after her tea, the evening on which this story opens, while her parents were discussing patent overshoes downstairs, she was in her room dressing for her first party—a dinner dance given by the wife of a cousin of her father's. This party, though Mary did not know it, was going to be a very smart one. Mrs. Franklyn Vane had come out of the West with a tremendous fortune and a fund of high spirits, thereby having made herself already a great person in the social world.

There had been some discussion between Mr. and Mrs. Tremont before Mary had been allowed to accept the invitation. They did not entirely approve of Mrs. Vane. "I don't know that I wish Mary to be seen very much

in Flora's company," Mr. Tremont had said, "especially without either of us. Flora is so—so— Her manner is not good, Sarah. There are stories—not exactly to her discredit, but she is so much in the papers! I almost think she does not *mind* being conspicuous. I saw her driving only yesterday in apple-green velvet. Fancy it, my dear!"

Mrs. Tremont was of the opinion that her husband should not be too hard on Flora, who could not be expected to understand the finer shades of good breeding, but who was kind-hearted, to say nothing of being a sort of relation. Besides, it was very desirable for Mary to meet a few people before she went to a large ball. In the end she was allowed to accept.

It was for this that she was now dressing. She was standing before her glass, a pretty, a very pretty piece of pink and white childhood, with all those marks of birth—the small head, the almost too long throat, the delicate hands and feet—on which the Tremonts prided themselves. Her short petticoat, all frills and lace, showed her white satin slippers and silk stockings. Her arms were lifted in fastening a green wreath of classic outline in her brown hair, while underneath her young, vivid face looked anything but Greek.

No terror of being without partners interfered with her anticipations of her first party. No doubt she knew that she was pretty, but this contributed little to her self-confidence, which was not self-confidence at all, but trusting ignorance. She said the word "ball" and saw her pretty, shimmering dress lying on the bed, and at once had a vision of herself floating round the room, going from partner to partner. What else was intended? Why did men and girls go to balls, if not to dance together?

As her mother entered, she gave a faint cheer of welcome.

"Hello, mother dear. I was wondering where you were. How do you like my wreath? Fancy having to drive to Seventy-eighth Street—three miles and

a half—quite a distance, even in the country."

Mrs. Tremont looked about for a disengaged chair, for her daughter's wearing apparel was widely scattered. "My dear Mary," she said, as she sat down, "do you remember a Mr. Wirden, who has dined here—?"

Miss Tremont raised her foot higher than custom allows, and made a pass above her instep. "Patent overshoes?" she asked. "Of course I do—so much nicer than most of papa's friends. Don't you know how delightfully he talked about Japan, and made us want to go there? And he sent me those wonderful gardenias for my tea, and said he was coming himself—only, he did not. I must speak to him about breaking his word."

"He has paid you a great compliment, Mary. He wishes to marry you."

Mary's round young arms dropped to her sides. "No!" she said, turning with a smile she could not repress. "He doesn't! Why, he has only seen me half a dozen times."

"It does seem strange, doesn't it?" her mother answered. "Not that any one should admire you, but that every one always cares most for what they haven't themselves. He said something to your father about the charm of your simplicity and breeding. He spoke to your father downtown this morning."

"Well, of all surprising things!" cried Mary. Evidently the news was only another drop in her excitement; a first proposal was only a delightfully appropriate prelude to a first dance. "What did father say?"

"Oh, that he would consult me; that he—really, I don't know exactly, dear."

"Mother, he did not leave him in any doubt?"

"I am sure he said nothing to encourage him, but he could not dismiss the matter without speaking to you. You must know that Mr. Wirden appears like a gentleman, and is immensely rich—"

"So he is, so he is," said Mary, lightly, "but you know you would not like patent overshoes for a son-in-law.

Heavens, think what father and mother patent overshoes may be!"

"He is an orphan," Mrs. Tremont put in, gently, without in the least stopping the flow of her daughter's eloquence.

"When I remember how you felt when Cousin Ned married Flora, and her father had only made his fortune in drugs—ever so much more refined than patent overshoes! Anyhow, mother, I don't mean to marry for years—not until there is absolutely nothing else for me to do, when I am twenty-five or six. And, by the way, when I do marry, it will be a man who has asked me himself. Father might just mention that."

"You have quite made up your mind?" her mother asked, with a sigh of relief she could not conceal.

"Of course, and so have you, and so has father—hasn't he?"

Mrs. Tremont hesitated. "I don't exactly understand your father's attitude. You know he likes Mr. Wirden very much, personally. He would be willing to give his consent if you wished it."

"Well, I don't," said Mary. "Why should I? I am not a bit mercenary. I have everything in the world I want. I think it is disgusting to care for money. What possible good can it do you if you are not happy? Mr. Wirden does not pretend to care for me—does he?"

"As I told you, he seems to admire you greatly, but I suppose his motives are largely ambitious——"

"Oh, I see; it would be a wonderful thing for him to marry a Tremont. Well, he can't have this one. Tell father to be quite clear. This will be a lesson to me. I shall never be expansive and confidential with father's friends again. Do you remember that evening at the Manor when I took Mr. Wirden out to row on the river and I talked to him about myself and he was so sympathetic? I thought it was age and experience that made him so, but apparently it was mere calculation. Good-night, dear mother; don't sit up for me. I shall be late if I don't hurry. Insist that father should be firm, won't you?"

At their own quiet dinner—which had been delayed until Mary had started—Mr. and Mrs. Tremont returned to the subject that was in their thoughts.

"Did you sound her, Sarah?"

"It is just as I thought. She won't hear of it."

No disappointment was visible in Mr. Tremont's face. "Well, well," he said, and added, after a moment: "There are a great many objections, of course, but I liked the man. I should have been glad to give him a helping hand." If the president of the Memorial Bank could have heard that innocent wish!

"I hope," Mr. Tremont went on, "that you did not say anything too definite to Mary. On thinking over our interview, I recall that his idea seemed to be merely to give me notice of his intentions, in view of her extreme youth and inexperience. I do not think that he intended me to make his addresses for him."

"I did not understand that," said his wife, "but it could make no difference. She is quite decided. And, really, Ferdinand, it would not do. Mary, I hope, will make a really good match."

"I hope so, I hope so," returned Ferdinand; and so these affectionate parents dismissed the subject of a marriage with a man who was already the object of half the far-seeing mothers in New York.

Mrs. Tremont obeyed her daughter's instructions as far as not sitting up went, but she could hardly be expected to go to sleep. She lay awake listening for the sound of the returning cab, recalling the lovely brilliance of the girl's appearance, recalling her own youth.

It was not so very late, not more than one o'clock, when she heard the clatter of a horse's hoofs, the slam of the cab door, the scratch of a latchkey and the rustle of skirts through the hall. She immediately appeared, blinking at the strong light in her daughter's room. The maid was sent away.

"I'll unlace Miss Mary. Well, dear, did you enjoy it?"

The girl's face was not visible as her mother's bent over the lacing, and her

voice sounded exhausted as she answered: "Oh, yes!"

"And you met a great many pleasant people?" Mrs. Tremont went on; and received in reply the bare names of the girl's supper and cotillion partners.

"There were no favors, I see."

"No," said Mary, and then, twisting round, she added, passionately: "Oh, yes, there were lots of them, but I did not get any. I had a horrid time. I hardly danced at all, and I am so tired!" She flung herself upon her mother's shoulder. Some moments are bitterer than tragedies.

Mrs. Tremont patted her hand in great distress. "It was my fault, dear. I should not have sent you to Flora's house alone. She is not——"

"Oh, it wasn't her fault, mother," Mary answered, raising her head and beginning recklessly to pull down the hair which only a few hours before she had taken such care to arrange. "She did her best. It was owing to her that I had any partners at all. I saw her pleading, actually *pleading*, with one man, and then she brought him up and introduced him, and he at once asked me to dance the cotillion. I must be awfully unimaginative, mother," she went on, sitting down limply on the edge of the bed, "for it never even occurred to me that I would not have partners for everything till just before the cotillion began, and then I said to a girl who was standing near me: 'What do you do if no one asks you to dance?' and she looked at me as if I had been a toad, and said: 'I can't imagine. I never go to parties unless I am engaged beforehand.' I don't think I shall ever go to another, anyhow."

"You must not say that, darling," said Mrs. Tremont, who was by this time almost as near tears as her daughter. "When you go out among my old friends——"

"I wish I had gone home after dinner," Mary interrupted, staring before her with round, sad eyes. "Dinner was not so bad. The man who took me in was very kind, and asked me to go to supper. At the time I thought him a funny little, fat, bald thing, but when

supper came and I saw him trotting toward me it was like seeing an old friend."

"Surely, the men who were at your tea were civil to you?"

"None of them were there, mother. I had never seen any of them before. You know Cousin Flora wrote that it was for *débutantes*, but it seemed as if it were for older women in long trains and diamond crowns. I was not the only girl who had a horrid time, but I think," she added, judicially, "that I had the worst."

There was a dreary silence. It would have been hard to say which looked saddest, Mary in her finery or Mrs. Tremont in her Noah's Ark dressing gown.

At last Mary looked up. "Mother, do you know whom I have been thinking of all evening? Mr. Wirден."

"Why, dear?"

"I wish he were possible, mother; that it had not been patent overshoes, I mean. It would be such fun to go at those horrid girls again with a fortune. You don't know how dreadful it was. They made you feel that if you did not know the people they knew, and do the things they did, you weren't worth considering at all, as if you weren't even there. I should so like to be rich, just so that if I were rude to them they would mind."

"My dear Mary," gasped Mrs. Tremont, "do remember that, after all, you are a lady!"

"But that does not help, mother; in fact, it is rather against you. I almost wish I weren't."

Mrs. Tremont opened her mouth to protest against such sentiments, but changed her mind and was silent. She ought, she knew, to have pointed out the meanness of caring so much, the wickedness of envy, hatred and malice, but youth must have its weaknesses. Besides, the elder lady herself, who had counted so much on her daughter's enjoyment, who had sacrificed something for the sake of the pretty, shimmering dress, was not without some bitterness of feeling on her own account.

## II.

Perhaps it was just as well for Mary that the next day her thoughts were painfully changed. Her father, who had been suffering from a cold for several days, was very much worse, and almost immediately his case was pronounced to be pneumonia. For some time his condition was serious, and when he was at length out of danger he was ordered to spend the rest of the winter in Southern California.

This seemed a sufficiently dreary end to a débutante's first season, so dreary that Mrs. Franklyn Vane, who was nothing if not good-natured, suggested to her husband that they should ask Mary to stay with them during the absence of her parents. Mr. Vane, who had a great affection for his cousin, Ferdinand, was delighted at this fresh proof of his wife's generosity. Oddly enough, the hesitation was on the other side. Mr. Tremont was at first squarely against the proposition, although aware how much was to be said in its favor; yet, to confide their innocent, well-brought-up daughter to so harum-scarum a person as Mrs. Vane—Mr. Tremont shook his head.

Mrs. Tremont, however, while she believed herself to be arguing the case with perfect open-mindedness, had really, though she did not know it, decided from the first that Mary was to accept. The thought of the girl's disappointment, of all her pretty dresses, of the impossibility of starting over again the next winter, after the combined expenses of a town house and a southern trip—all these things taken together convinced her that Mrs. Vane was a much more deserving person than Ferdinand supposed, and that Mary's fine feelings and perfect training would fit her to move safely through any society. So by the end of January Mr. and Mrs. Tremont, with a trained nurse, were on their way to Santa Barbara, while Mary, very lonely and not a little excited, was established in the Vanes' best spare bedroom, which was all hung in lilac silk and overlooked the park.

Nothing could have been kinder than the Vanes were. Franklyn, a little, round-eyed man, who gave, somehow, the effect of having literally burst out into yellow mustache and hair, never returned to his house until seven in the evening, so his friendliness had not very much opportunity to manifest itself. But Flora, though she did not spend much more time under her own roof than her husband did, contrived to give a good deal of personal attention to Mary. She at once instituted a campaign of reform as far as clothes were concerned. She altered Mary's meek style of doing her hair, and sent the girl to her own *corsetière* and shoemaker. The second day of her stay she came into her room saying:

"There, child, I have just ordered you a scarlet tulle ball dress from my own woman."

Mary gasped and said, faintly, that she was afraid her mother wanted her to wear nothing but white during her first winter.

"Of course, of course, people did, I dare say, in your mother's time, but now no one wants to be *jeune fille* until after they are fifty. You see, men can't bear all vice or all virtue. It is the mixture, the contrast, they like. If you are really perfectly innocent, then you must appear sophisticated, and if every one knows that you are as bad as you can be, why, then, of course, there is something piquant about your wearing white muslin and a blue sash. It is the simplest thing for you, my dear; you can smoke cigarettes and take men home from balls in the brougham. But I have a much harder time. I am so confusingly near the line. I am just as good as I can be, and a perfect wife to Frank, but my looks!" She surveyed her large, blond person, just then arrayed in orange-colored cloth with lemon and black trimmings. "I am not at all sure I ought not to dress *down* my appearance instead of dressing *up* my virtue."

Mary laughed irrepressibly, and her cousin grew at once more solemn.

"It is a serious matter, Mary. A woman must understand these things,



especially if she is unmarried. Ah, if I only had a daughter, instead of those three boys! Dear lambs, I love them ever so much better, but it would be such fun to have a girl to marry. I am a born matchmaker. If you will pay attention to me, Mary, you will be well settled before your parents come home—engaged, I mean."

"But, oh, dear, Cousin Flora, I don't want to marry for years!"

"Want to? Of course you don't want to, but you must look ahead. You don't want to spend the rest of your life at Tremont Manor, do you? Don't be foolish. Take your chance when it comes. I have known lots of girls go down on their knees to men when they were thirty that they turned up their noses at at eighteen." Observing that Mary looked thoughtful, Mrs. Vane departed, hoping that she had not spoken in vain.

It is hardly to be supposed that she should have spoken in vain, although she did not have to rely upon the spoken word alone. The whole atmosphere of the house was eloquent, and, on a girl of eighteen, was bound to be effective. The supreme importance of going to the right houses, of wearing the right clothes, talking the jargon, being seen with the right men, and doing things, as the phrase is, the right way, was so universally assumed by every one, from the guests to the servants, that Mary very soon began to think so, too.

Her state of mind was particularly bitter owing to the fact that this very position which she found herself without was the one thing she had been brought up to believe was peculiarly her right. If her parents had been at home, she would probably have drifted into the little set of shrunken fortunes and high-sounding names who would still have recognized the supreme importance of the name Tremont, but she now had small opportunity to see such people. The society in which she found herself was one which did not guarantee a position to any one. Every one, so she thought, seemed to feel they were playing a difficult and amusing game, in which no one could afford to lose a

trick. If any one stopped struggling, why, he—or she—disappeared. Now, struggling for recognition was a thing for which Mary was singularly unadapted, both by training and temperament.

Mrs. Vane was never visible a moment before twelve, and never quiet a moment after. There were always men who dropped in to lunch—Mary had supposed that all masculine New York was downtown till dark—then bridge, and visits, and more people to tea, and then a rush to be ready to go out to dine. Into this rush Mary was at first caught up by the mere strength of her cousin's energy, but before long the girl saw with a sort of anguish that she was beginning to drop out; to be a clog in the wheels.

She was thoroughly unsuited to her surroundings. The conversation of Flora's drawing room—not so very dreadful—sounded shocking to ears bred in Tremont Manor. The younger men, invited especially for Mary's benefit, admired her looks, but quickly drifted away to Flora's more lively company. Mary, who had her own little vein of liveliness, found herself chilled and suppressed by the strength of her cousin's personality. She was conscious of being silent, but what was there for her to say, with Flora standing on the hearth rug, laughing her loud, boyish laugh, and hurling personal, outspoken gibes at every member of the company? And if Mary did force herself to speak, for the mere sake of speaking, she was sure to say something that sounded utterly banal, or else something that could be twisted into some dreadful meaning, that made her cousin shout with amusement.

The fault was not entirely Mary's. To tell the truth, Flora, for all her good nature, was too well accustomed to occupying the center of the stage, to give it up for an instant to any one. It was not mere accident, perhaps, that Mary found herself at a disadvantage. Real kindness of heart moved Flora to invite eligible young millionaires to the house, but she could not help knowing when they went away that it was of

her rather than of Mary that their minds were full. But, then, Mary was so absurdly ignorant of how to manage them. Wasn't it really necessary to give her an object lesson? It was discouraging to try to do anything for a girl who had so little idea of how to help herself.

Mary was always being civil to the wrong people, because they had been kind to her, or were friends of her mother's; as if, as Flora exclaimed in private to her husband, that were any reason. You could not expect smart people to be nice to you if you let yourself be seen with frumps. She supposed all girls were stupid and obstinate, but, really, what was the good? Mary had not even spoken to that good-looking Richards boy when he had sat next to her, and he had fourteen millions in his own right. Of course it was a pity that the cocktail had gone to his head, but if you looked at that the right way it only showed that he was not accustomed to them. Oh, yes, if you chose to be horrid, that he had had another before he came.

Mr. Vane observed that, in his opinion, Mary was a dear, sweet little girl, and his wife replied that dear, sweet little girls were a drug on the market.

Now, doubtless, if Mary had been a little older and a good deal wiser, all these things would not have had the same effect upon her. She would have stuck to her own views and line of conduct, and would perhaps have been very happy with a few friends to whom her qualities appealed. But, unhappily, she could not resist trying to be a little what Flora wanted her to be, entering the arena in which she saw others so successfully contending. Her little efforts to be bold and dashing were, of course, complete failures, and noticed by no one but herself, but to her they were momentous. She could no longer feel that success was within her reach if she chose to stoop low enough to take it. She had stooped and failed.

If she had had any life of her own, she could perhaps have risen above these considerations, but she was staying away from her own family for only

one purpose: to enjoy herself. And what was her first winter giving her? She seriously believed that the dreariness of her whole future was assured. If one was not attractive at eighteen, when could one hope to be?

There were, of course, a few men, most of them past thirty, who obviously and mildly admired her and gave Mrs. Vane an opportunity for teasing her in public, but most of these had been somewhat antagonized by her new manner—her effort to be like her cousin and the girls she knew.

It was in this wretched state of mind, when she had neither the consciousness of self-respect nor the success of craft, that she went out to a girls' luncheon. It was given by a Miss Raimund, a downright young person for whom Mary had a real liking, though she went reluctantly.

"I don't think I like girls' lunches, Cousin Flora," she said. "Girls make me uncomfortable. Even when I can't be sure what it is they said that I did not like, I find I come home ruffled and uncomfortable." But Flora very properly pushed her into the carriage.

"Be hateful back again, my dear," she said. "Make them more uncomfortable. Learn to be a cat; then they will respect you."

Certainly Mary had no intention of putting this advice into practice. After she was once among them, she felt merely completely out of it, as if she had been suddenly endowed with the gift of invisibility, so little notice was bestowed upon her.

The conversation, which was entirely general—if every one's speaking at once may be so described—turned upon a fancy ball which was to take place the following month. Every one asked what every one else was going to wear, and did not wait for the answer. Finally Miss Raimund, observing that Mary had not had an opportunity to speak, turned to her pointedly and asked what her costume was to be. Mary replied that she was saved that anxiety, as she was not invited. As ill luck would have it, the confession fell in the only pause that so far had occurred.

A girl with lorgnettes put them to her eyes and said:

"How very odd! Such an awfully general party."

To change the subject, Clara Raimund began hastily to inveigh against the habit of giving over dancing parties to married people—"as if we went out to see our mothers' trains switching round the room."

"I thought you liked older people, Clara—older men, at least."

"Age is such an artificial division"—Clara tossed her head. "I like a real man when I see him. So would you, if he ever spoke to you—charming creature!"

"I don't think he is charming at all—your friend, Clara. I feel as if he were making fun of me all the time."

"He never speaks to me," said another.

"Oh," a voice took it up, "I meant to apologize to you, Clara. We asked him to dine the night you came, but he was going out of town."

"Well," said Clara, with her usual uncompromising manner, "I dare say he would not have spoken to me if he had come. We took him to the opera the other evening, and he never took the slightest notice of me. He is awfully indifferent."

"I call it rude," said one of his detractors.

"But he is so awfully run after. Just think how Mrs. Grey and Bessie follow him up."

Mary whispered to Miss Raimund to ask of whom they were talking, and was only too wretchedly conscious of the flood of color that swept over her face as she heard the answer: "Mr. Wirdden."

"Do you know him?" half a dozen amused voices asked.

"Yes; oh, yes," she stammered, and then, with an effort to regain her calm, she added, casually: "Not as well as all of you seem to—just as one knows a man who comes to dine and sends one flowers." The next instant she had the grace to be heartily ashamed of this barefaced bid for notice, this boast of her powers. How cheap a triumph!

Cheap or not, it was complete. The girls turned to her with the unanimity of a stage chorus.

"Flowers? He did! Clara, did he ever send you flowers?"

Mary's own state of mind was extremely perturbed. Her sense of Wirdden's importance had risen immeasurably. If it had been a shock to her to find that her social position on which she had so counted amounted to nothing, here was an even greater surprise in the fact that she had long possessed something of which she had not understood the value. The man was transfigured in her eyes. And if any one supposes a girl of eighteen is not apt to be so influenced by the opinion of her fellows, he knows but little of the psychology of the sex in its more youthful stages.

Ah, just suppose, for the sake of supposing, that she had accepted him, how different her position would be! How these girls would envy her! How the mere mention of her acquaintance with him altered their attitude! And the news of her engagement! How much more brilliant than the little, half-fledged creatures Cousin Flora was always recommending to her attention! And this opportunity she had lost! Or, had she? Back and forth over the ground she went, and before she went to bed that night had written and posted the following letter:

DEAR MR. WIRDEN: Could you come to see me to-morrow at my cousin's, Mrs. Vane's, about half-past five? Perhaps this will strike you as an odd request, after all that has occurred, but I have something to say to you.

Sincerely yours,

MARY TREMONT.

### III.

She named an hour when she knew her cousin would be out, and she could have the drawing room to herself. She sat behind the tea tray with hands almost as cold as the silver she touched, even before the sound of the opening of the door made her heart begin to beat in great, slow blows. The house was a very silent one; the servants were specially required to make no sound,

and they moved like cats. The butler opened the door and murmured, "Mr. Wirden," and disappeared. Mary was alone with her fate.

He stood on the hearth rug, irritatingly calm, pulling off his gloves, stuffing them in his pocket in the most leisurely way, and asking after her parents—questions which she answered quite at random.

"I am so sorry to be a little behind the hour you named," he went on, pleasantly. "There was a man at my office whom I could not get rid of—one of these terrible fellows who have nothing to say of any importance. He got to the door three times, and each time said: 'Now, let me see; have we gone over the ground?' and came back again." He smiled at her lightly. She felt that in another minute he would ask her how she was enjoying her winter, and if he did, she knew she would never have the courage to say what she wanted to.

Two months of living among fashionable people had given her greater respect for well-built clothes. She looked at him now with very different eyes. Was this the same man with whom she had rowed on the river, gossiping easily to him of her thoughts and hopes, as if he were so old as to be perfectly safe? His thin, bronzed face seemed to her almost handsome now.

"Will you have some tea?" she asked, in a voice that just did not shake.

His manner of accepting it, of sitting down, of selecting a piece of toast from the table, was absolutely easy. He so consciously repudiated any hint of drama in the situation that Mary, in terror lest her courage should fail her utterly, broke out with:

"Weren't you very much surprised when you got my letter?"

"Very much," he answered.

"After my father's definite answer, it must have struck you— You see, I thought that there was at least something to talk over in the situation."

"Heaven help the situation in which there isn't," he said, looking about for the cream.

This was really maddening. After

all, he ought to have been the more ill at ease of the two. It was he who had asked and been refused. He should have borne himself more humbly.

"Won't you please tell me," she continued, "why you thought it would be an advantage to you to marry a Tremont?"

She had his attention at last. He looked at her, thought over, apparently, what she might possibly mean, and then asked:

"What?"

"Why, of course at first it seemed natural to me. You see, I had been brought up to think it was such a great thing to be descended from an old family; but no one else does; no one ever heard of the Tremonts. So I can't see why you thought it would be any advantage to you to marry one."

"I thought it would be an advantage to me to marry you," he said, mildly.

"But it wouldn't be a bit," she answered, earnestly.

"I think I must be the judge of that."

"No, because perhaps you don't understand how much thought of you are. I did not know myself until to-day. They talk of you as if you were a prince. Really they do. I think I ought to tell you that I could not do you any good at all. It would not be a fair bargain."

He had begun to frown rather alarmingly. "A bargain?" he said.

Mary refused to be frightened. "Oh," she said, wagging her head, "you must not suppose that because I was not 'out' at the time I did not know enough of the world to understand your proposal. You wanted position, and you thought perhaps I wanted—wanted what you had to offer."

"My mind was quickly disabused of that idea," he returned, cheerfully.

"But don't you see?—what I am trying to tell you is that I had nothing to bring. My position does not amount to anything. Why, you have a better one yourself. As I said, it would not be a fair bargain."

He was looking not at her but at the fire as he asked: "Am I to under-

stand that it is one which you would now be willing to enter into?"

There was a decided pause, and then Mary said in a voice she hardly recognized: "Yes."

He dropped his open hand twice on his knee. "Ah!" he said. "I wonder why. Or perhaps I could guess. Let me see, it is just about six weeks since your parents went away, isn't it? Dear, dear!" She did not like the quickly repressed smile that curved his lip for an instant.

"You need not sneer," she said. "You were willing to marry me for interested motives."

"Oh, I own I fell, I succumbed, but remember the temptation. Think of the benefit of being united to a Tremont."

Again his tone failed to please her. "You wish to withdraw your offer?" she said.

"No." He met her eyes very squarely. "No, I don't withdraw my offer, but I wish to understand. Bargains must be made on business principles. Could you, for instance, define your feeling for me?"

"Why, but I hardly know you," Mary returned, very much surprised at the question. "I haven't any feeling for you."

"Good!" He took it quite cheerfully. "Then the situation is this: for the sake of certain advantages, real or fancied, we are willing to enter into a contract of marriage on the clear understanding that we care nothing at all about each other?"

Mary nodded. She could not help thinking it would have shown more tact on his part if he had not insisted on being so clear.

"Excellent! Well"—he clapped his hands together—"when shall we be married? To-morrow?"

"Oh, no!" cried Mary, for the first really startled. "Why, I am not yet sure I mean to be engaged to you."

"Ah!" He sank back in his chair, pulling meditatively at his mustache. "That does not seem so clear. We intend to be married, but at present we are not even engaged. Exactly what are we?"

Mary found herself stammering. "We are—we are half engaged," she hazarded.

He nodded in perfect acquiescence. "I see. And what, may I ask, are the rights and privileges of being half engaged? Semi-engaged, one might say."

She could not help smiling. "I don't know," she said. "I never was half engaged before."

"Nor I, believe me."

"But you see what I mean, don't you?" she asked. "For a month or so no one will know at all. We can just consider it, and if at the end of that time I find that I can't—that I couldn't—"

"Couldn't bear me in spite of money?"

"If either of us finds it won't do, why, it would not be like breaking a real engagement. It would just be withdrawing."

"On due notification to the party of the second part. It sounds as if we were incorporated under the laws of the State of New Jersey. Yes, it seems very complete. Only one objection occurs to me. Suppose some one else should turn up."

"Oh!" Plainly the thought had never crossed Mary's mind. "It is not very likely, is it, at your age? I mean—I mean that you must have been in love already, haven't you?"

"That or something very like it; but how about you?"

"Oh, I! I doubt if I ever fall in love. I'm afraid I'm very cold."

She was somewhat disconcerted when for all answer, he got up, approached her, lifted her chin with one finger and looked fixedly into her little flushed face for what seemed to her an age. "Possibly," he said.

Mary wrenched her chin free with a look of fury. "You had no right to do that," she said.

"No?" He raised his eyebrows. "It is not one of the privileges of the semi-engaged. It is permitted to come and see you, isn't it?"

"Oh, yes, and to be very attentive to me at parties—only, of course, I don't want Cousin Flora to write to my parents."

"They would not approve?"

"Father would not mind, he likes you so much, but mother——" Her eyes rolled upward.

"Humph! She does not share the sentiment?"

"Only because she is so—so old-fashioned, particularly about professions. She would not like me to marry even a doctor."

"I understand perfectly. A manufacturer and a Tremont! What a contrast!" He moved toward the door. "There is only one thing more. I should like to be assured that if at any time before our marriage—if that should ever take place—you see anyone in whom you take the faintest interest, who inspires you with any doubt of your invincible coldness, you will tell me on the instant."

"That seems fair," said Mary; "but why——"

"You give me your word?"

"Yes, but why only before our marriage?"

This question seemed to strike him as amusing. "Afterward," he answered, "I shall know without being told."

"It won't happen," she reassured him. "I shall not fall in love, because I should ask so much of the man I loved."

"I don't doubt it, my dear young lady, seeing what you ask of a man you don't."

"What do you mean?" she asked; but he had risen and was holding out his hand.

"Good-by," he said. "I have to thank you for a delightful afternoon."

She studied him. "Some one said you were always laughing at people."

"Not at all. It is usually my own conduct that excites my risibilities. Good-by."

But she couldn't let him go on that. "Mr. Wirdden," she said, "you don't think I was wrong to send for you, do you?"

"Wrong, my dear Miss Tremont? Just before I came here I bought a thousand pounds of crude rubber from a man. He did not ask if I had thought him wrong to suggest the deal."

The reply was not a satisfactory one, but she felt obliged to accept it.

After he had gone she stood for a long time staring into the fire.

"I wonder," she exclaimed, at length—"I wonder whether, after all, I thoroughly understand him!"

#### IV.

The next day he sent her a jewel which he described as a "semi-engagement ring." She determined at once that she could not keep it, yet derived no small satisfaction from wearing it in the privacy of her own room. It was intended for the little finger—an emerald of perfect color.

There was a dinner party at home that evening, and after all the guests had gone Mary still sat up, writing, with her door locked.

MY DEAR MR. WIRDEN: Ought one to take jewelry from a man one is not exactly engaged to? I'm afraid not, though I want to dreadfully; it is so beautiful. Sometimes I look at it this way: That if I am going to be engaged to you, it is all right to take it, and if I'm not, then I can send it back. Only, what shows me that it is not all right is the fact that it makes me feel guilty, and the terrible part of that is that I find I don't so much mind. Anyhow, thank you ever so much. You are so kind.

The next evening, at the opera, she became suddenly aware that he had entered the box and was talking to her cousin, and then presently he slipped into the chair behind her, whispering:

"And how is my semi-beloved?"

She explained that the affections were not supposed to be even partially engaged.

There was something deliciously clandestine in being obliged to speak thus in tones inaudible to any one else. He began at once to persuade her in regard to the ring. She feared her own manner betrayed a certain perturbation in striking contrast to his. As he whispered his revolutionary sentiments on the subject of semi-engagements to the back of her head, no one looking on would have suspected him of discussing anything that even held his attention.



She could not help entering a little into the spirit of so pleasant a comedy. And before he went away she found she had promised to keep the ring. She noticed him later in one or two other boxes, talking with a manner infinitely more impressive, and, without jealousy, she indulged in a slightly malicious thrill of ownership. Ah, if these other women only knew!

These women, as she described her Cousin Flora's friends and acquaintances, began, if not to know, at least to talk. Some inclined to think that Mrs. Vane herself was the object of his attentions; others, that it was mere accident that he appeared so often in Mary's company.

Mrs. Vane herself thought it worth while to warn the girl.

"Now, I don't want to interfere, Mary, my dear," she said; "and it is all very well if you don't run away with the idea that he means anything. I've seen girls make themselves unhappy over men like Lewis Wirden, and there is poor Bessie Gray, who doesn't attempt to conceal how she feels about him. Not that it is his fault—as far as I know. But he just probably thinks you a poor orphaned creature, and he is very kind-hearted, but he is *not a marrying man*. Mark my words. He won't marry, and if he did, it would not—well, I won't go into that. He as good as told me so once. He thinks modern girls too awful. Now, you, my love, can't afford, situated as you are, to waste your time on non-marrying men, and you certainly can't afford to break your heart."

"I don't think I shall ever break my heart over Mr. Wirden," said Mary, a little angered and a good deal amused.

"You don't? Well, let me tell you that that is a dangerous attitude for a child like you, when an attractive man begins to hang about."

"But, dear Cousin Flora," the girl answered, "he is so much older than I."

"And so much cleverer and more experienced. Is that in your favor, you little goose?"

Mary sighed. She sometimes had a faint hankering after the true romance.

And yet her life now became infinitely pleasanter. Not only had she gained a certain importance that precluded her being forgotten and left out any more, but she found it very soothing to have some one to take an interest in her. She was no longer lonely and deserted. If Wirden did not always contrive to turn up on the afternoons when she was alone, he was certain, if he knew that Mr. and Mrs. Vane were dining out without her, to make up a small party to dine and go to the theater. Besides, he was always a sympathetic listener to the recital of the merest trifles. She began to tell him a great many things; little intimate thoughts and actions that had never before seemed to her material for conversation. The relation was wonderfully pleasant to her. Did she, she used to wonder, feel prepared to enter into a real engagement with him? The only conclusion she reached was that she was not prepared to let him go.

When suddenly her peace of mind was disturbed, it was through a channel that did not promise danger.

Mrs. Vane decided to enlarge her ballroom. The architect, a great man, came to lunch three days in succession. The next morning Mary was in the ballroom, where the piano stood. She was fond of music, and kept up the little ability she possessed by practicing for an hour before Flora came down every morning that offered her nothing better. Now, looking up, she saw that she had an audience—a slim, dark-eyed young man, who stared at her from the doorway; stared as if he had already looked some time without getting his fill.

Mary's hands dropped from the keys and she stood up. This was not an ordinary glance, nor was this dark, earnest-looking boy an ordinary person.

A moment later he was explaining that he had come to make drawings of the room. Was she, by any chance, interested in drawings? It happened that she was.

Four mornings were expended thus. On the fifth he did not come, and Mary, at length rising from the piano, realized that time hung strangely heavily upon her hands. She began, too, to con-

sider what the dark-eyed young man would think of her for entering so easily into conversation. Like other members of her sex, she found lack of conventionality reprehensible only when it ceased to attract. Before this, it had not occurred to her to question her own conduct. Did he suppose she was one of the maids? No, he couldn't think that, for the maids did not play the piano. But, whatever he thought of her, he evidently did not care to see her again.

At luncheon, Mr. Reece, the architect, again appeared. Mary gathered that the young man's drawings had been submitted. She heard the great man say to her cousin:

"And what did you think of young Ferrars? Handsome young chap, isn't he?"

"He may be," said Mrs. Vane; "but I did not see him. I would not get up before twelve o'clock to see Adonis. Who is he?"

"One of the clerks in my office. A talented young fellow, but lazy. Told me the other day that the difference between business and art was that in business you worked when other people chose, but in art when you yourself chose. I replied that it was a pity he did not choose a little oftener, and that if he meant to remain in my office I should have something to say about the matter. He is coming on Monday to finish. You had better get up and have a look at him. Wonderful yellow-brown eyes as big as saucers, and a poor chin."

Mary could hardly believe her good luck in that no one noticed her deepened color, although it was quite natural that Mr. Reece and her cousin should not notice it, for they had quite forgotten her presence. Well, she was glad she was warned. She would not practice the next morning; and, having soothed her pride with this resolution throughout the afternoon and evening, she found herself the next morning about eleven o'clock at the piano as usual.

The drawings of Mr. Ferrars did not make much progress that morning; in

fact, he admitted that they were already finished, and that his visit had, in reality, quite another object. He wondered if Miss Tremont could guess it?

How in the world, Mary asked, did he know her name?

He smiled, pointing to the music sheet where it was clearly written. Wasn't he ever to see her again?

Mary made the time-honored reply, which to her seemed perfectly original, that she hoped they might meet again some time.

He had been leaning with his elbow on the piano, but at this he flung away, and began to walk up and down the room, frowning and biting off the ends of cynical sentences. Then, finding her quite unmoved by the exhibition, he came back to the piano, and asked plainly if he might be allowed to come to see her.

She said feebly: "But you don't know my cousin, do you? I am staying with her."

"I have been here five mornings already without seeing her," he answered, "and there are some three hundred and fifty odd left. Can't I come at this same hour, even if I have not work to do?"

Mary returned firmly that he certainly could not, but before he left she had admitted that Monday was her cousin's afternoon at home.

The interview had served to bring one fact to her notice—her promise to Wirden. Was she taking an interest in this young man? An interest, she remembered, was the fact she had promised to confide. In examining her conscience, she realized, with a shock, how completely he had occupied her attention for the past week. But Mr. Wirden had meant a dangerous, a romantic, interest, the precursor of love, whereas this— Well, it was rather romantic.

The next morning she set forth on what she felt was at once a sacrificial pilgrimage and an adventure. Wirden had written to her two or three times from his office, so she knew the address, and reached the building without mishap, although she suffered from a vague terror from being in surround-

ings so strange and crowded, where every one seemed so very busy, yet not too busy to stare at her, as if she had no right to be there.

The office was on the second story of an old, an almost historic, building. Mary pushed open the great glass doors, and as she stood there, almost deafened by the din of typewriters, she was run into by men hurrying out with hands full of papers. They paid no attention to her whatsoever, but presently another of a similar appearance advanced and asked her what she wanted.

"I want to see Mr. Wirlden," said Mary, beginning to feel rather homesick.

"Have you an appointment?"

"No."

"Will you give me your name, please?"

"Oh, no!" said Mary, for secrecy seemed most important.

"Perhaps if you could explain your business to me—"

"I could not possibly do that," said Mary, and could not help smiling at the mere idea.

It was perhaps the smile that did it, for the stern young man at once hurried away, and gave, apparently, a sufficiently favorable report of her to bring Wirlden out on the instant. The look with which he greeted her had something so intense as to be alarming. She began to wonder if it were wrong to come disturbing busy men during business hours.

His private room, to which he conducted her, was large and pleasant, and, in Mary's opinion, very untidy. He made her sit down in a big leather-covered chair, and, looking at her, said:

"It is so delightful to see you here, I can hardly believe my eyes."

"It has not been very easy getting here," sighed Mary. "It took ever so much more time than I thought it would, and as for your clerk—he seemed to think I had a bomb, he was so cross about letting me see you."

"Saunders is a very valuable young man," said Wirlden. "His orders are most explicit. I see no one who won't

send either their name or business. But, nevertheless, he came in just now and reported 'a young lady who does not wish to give her name' with such meaning that I could not help asking: 'Saunders, would you advise me to see her?' and he answered: 'Yes, indeed, sir,' so impressively that I came out at once."

Mary clasped her hands nervously. "I want to see you—" she began, but he interrupted her.

"About business, of course, but first we'll have some lunch. It is not far from one o'clock now. Don't object. The modern note in business is to keep your clients in a good temper. I insist on offering you civility." He rang a bell. "Saunders, I am going out. If that gentleman comes again, tell him I have gone out of town about the matter we are both interested in. Are you ready, Miss Tremont?"

"You are not very truthful, are you?" said Mary.

"Would you have had me leave word that I had gone out to lunch with the girl I am half engaged to?"

She murmured that she was not sure she ought to go to lunch with him, but he overcame her scruples, refusing to listen to what she had to say otherwise, and she felt she could not go home after such a tremendous expedition without the relief of a cleared conscience.

Seated at a small table in the little, old-fashioned, low-ceilinged restaurant, she at once attempted confession.

"I wanted to say—"

"The menu first," he put in. "Oysters, of course; an omelet with asparagus tips; and shall it be partridge or grouse? And salad—does celery and apple appeal to you? How about dessert? Cheese, fruit?"

With some apprehension of appearing too childish, Mary chose ice cream, and when at length he was ready to give her his attention, when he had put away a pencil, and rested his elbows on the table, and was looking at her with the utmost concentration, she experienced the strangest difficulty in speaking.

"I want to tell you—" she began

for the third time, and this time stopped of herself.

"I think I can guess," said he. "Another man?"

"How did you know?"

"Another man, confound him!—young and very much in love with you."

"Oh, no—at least, I have no reason to think so," said Mary, quickly.

"But I have—excellent reasons for thinking so. And so our poor little semi-engagement comes to an end;" and he looked at her quite sadly across the little table.

"But why?" cried the girl, surprised to find how disagreeable this conclusion was to her. "You know you made me promise that I would tell you if I saw any one in whom I took the least interest, and so I am telling you. That's all. I do take an interest, but not—but not—— Well, it is just as you like, of course. If you want to break our engagement——"

"Our semi-engagement," Wirdden corrected, gravely.

"You can, of course; but I'm sure I don't want to. I said I took an interest in this person, and so I do, but I am not at all sure I like him. He makes me feel—well, a little uncomfortable sometimes."

"Uncomfortable!" said Wirdden, quickly and seriously.

"I can never tell what he is going to say next."

"But that must be rather agreeable, I should think."

Mary looked candid. "I can't be sure whether I like it or not," she said. "I think perhaps it is on account of the way in which I met him. I must tell you about that, I suppose, though I know you will disapprove."

"I shall not."

"How do you know? You have not heard yet."

"I shall not disapprove," said Wirdden. "It is a mistake I leave to the other fellow. He will disapprove, you may be sure, when he hears of your semi-engagement. I warn you, child, he will make scenes."

Mary attempted to look as if this

would be very painful to her, but broke out irrepressibly with: "I dare say he would, but I don't know that I dislike scenes so much, though, of course, those dark, Southern looking people are apt to be so—so——"

"Oh, he is dark and Southern looking, is he?—worse luck to him!" said Wirdden, cheerfully. "Then it is certain. He will do them so effectively that he could not be expected to refrain from them. I shouldn't, in his place. I should have made love to you the first moment I saw you. I should have made you feel the wild and desperate responsibility it is to be a beautiful young woman."

We may assume that Mary was not wholly indifferent to the inferences of this speech, but she returned, simply:

"Oh, dear me, I'm glad to say he did nothing of the kind. Is that the way you behaved when—when— You know you admitted you had been in love."

"You have an excellent memory for trifles," he returned. "No, as a matter of fact, I never even told her that I loved her."

"And didn't she guess?"

He shook his head.

Mary considered the matter. "Do you know," she said, "I think that might have been rather a good plan? There is something so attractive about reserve. At least, I think there is."

"I am glad to hear you say so. One is never sure."

"And yet," she went on, "wasn't it rather hard on her? Suppose she had cared?"

"The situation was such," said Wirdden, "that if she had cared the least bit she would have understood that I did."

"But I don't see that at all," said Mary. "I think the more you care, the more apt you are to think that the other person doesn't."

Wirdden laughed. "I believe that dangerous boy has taught you something about the subject already," he observed.

In refuting this suggestion, she went on to give him an authentic account of her meetings with Ferrars, and the con-

fession which she had anticipated as a dreadful duty became almost a delightful confidence through the attention and sympathy he gave it. She had even got as far as to allow him to tease her, and he had asked how she was going to feel when she found that Mrs. Vane's new ballroom did not meet at the corners, before they rose from table.

"How ought I to go home?" she asked.

He answered that he had telephoned from his office for his automobile to come for her, and when they went into the street they found the great machine panting at the door.

She bade him good-by with regret. After all, she thought, as she whirled away, there was something very delightful in being taken care of by some one who understood.

V.

"There are only two excuses for a man's being cross," said Mrs. Hyllis: "losing money and falling in love. Have you lost money, Lewis?"

Wirdden shook his head. "Rather the other way," he said.

"Heavens and earth, my dear man—not the other alternative?"

"I deny that I was cross."

He and Mrs. Hyllis had been friends for many years. When it had nothing else to say, the world said that she was the only woman he had ever cared for. As a matter of fact, there had never been the slightest sentiment between them—no more, that is, than is necessary to any friendship between men and women that pretends to permanence.

"Yes, you were cross," said Mrs. Hyllis, judicially. "When I said that young girls liked the first man who made love to them, you answered that women's besetting sin was generalization. That was cross, Lewis; not so much the words, but the way you said them. Are you in love?"

"My dear Fanny!" he returned, as if the idea were too preposterous; and then, with a complete change of manner, went on: "My mind misgives me,

Fanny, that I am making the most colossal fool of myself. I wonder if you can tell me."

Mrs. Hyllis was unaffectedly interested.

Wirdden leaned back in his chair and looked at his feet, stretched out straight before him.

"Last summer," he said, "I happened to be thrown with a gentleman—an older man—of whom I saw a great deal. In this age, when we are all so uncertain whether it is worth while to do all the crazy things we always are doing, he seemed perfectly sure it was worth while to do nothing at all. He was nothing but a gentleman, and had a great idea of the importance of that career. I liked him. At last, one hot evening, he asked me to come home and dine with him—he lived a short distance out of town—and there I met his daughter. She had something of his calm, his conviction that to be well-born was enough for any one, only to his qualities she added others more likely to appeal to the world—beauty and grace and gentleness. And, in short, Fanny, I said to myself that that was the kind of girl a man wanted for his wife. She had been nowhere, seen nothing, wanted none of the worthless things that all the girls you know want. And I spoke to her father. I must admit that I did not intend to make a proposal in due form—I did not, I mean, intend that he should speak to her; but he took it so, and——"

"Oh, Lewis, how dreadful! You don't feel yourself to be irretrievably committed, do you?"

And he answered, unhesitatingly: "No. The poor old gentleman, who had anticipated this result, hated to give me the pain of telling me."

"She must indeed have been ignorant of the world," said Mrs. Hyllis; "but I can't help rather admiring her."

"A month or two later," Wirdden went on, "circumstances having changed a little, I had an opportunity to repeat my proposal, his time with a slightly different result. She took it under consideration. She is considering it now, Fanny."

"Dear Lewis, I cannot imagine her hesitating, but I feel no doubt as to the result. What is it you want me to tell you? Whether it can be that, having grown wiser, she has grown more mercenary, and whether interested motives enter into her present complaisance?"

"No," said he; "I don't want to be told that. I have not yet finished my story. She is considering, but in the meantime a beautiful youth has presented himself, with all the ardor of twenty-three. Now, Fanny, shall I pitch in and show the young dog how to make love in earnest; or shall I stand aside and give him as much rope as he needs to hang himself?"

"Pitch in, by all means."

"But it is sometimes a great advantage to be an outsider, Fanny—to stand aloof and be beckoned."

"Have you seen the boy, Lewis?"

Wirdden answered that he had not, not knowing how soon he was to be gratified in this respect. Later that same afternoon he went to see Mary. Ferrars was with her when word was brought up that Mr. Wirdden would like to see her for a moment. Her interview with Ferrars was becoming an emotional one, and, though she was not at all sorry to have it interrupted, she felt unequal to presiding at a meeting between the two. To Ferrars, of course, the name of Wirdden suggested nothing more than that of any other visitor, and he urged her to send the man away on any excuse, while he, Ferrars, would wait in an adjoining room—a suggestion to which Mary was not sorry to yield.

Ferrars had by this time become a regularly established visitor at the house. He had presented himself duly on a Monday afternoon, and had been introduced to Mrs. Vane, who thought him a romantic-looking youth, who might serve to distract her little cousin's mind from Wirdden's attentions, to which she appeared to attach the most ridiculous amount of importance. That such a hopelessly young and ineligible person could in himself constitute a danger never occurred to Mrs. Vane's practical intellect. She did worry over

the other affair, and even went so far as to remonstrate with Wirdden, after Mary had confessed to the luncheon party downtown.

"Play fair; hit a man your own size, Mr. Wirdden," she had said. "Why this slaughter of the innocents? Make love to me, if necessary, but for goodness' sake let that poor child have one winter without a broken heart."

A man needs more than the average expertness to escape from such a conversation as this without looking like a fool. Wirdden laughed so good-temperedly that Mrs. Vane was almost persuaded that she was mistaken.

From Mary also, Wirdden heard of her cousin's solitude. The idea formed the basis of a number of amusing, whispered conversations that a third person would have been at a loss to understand. They were, Mary thought, becoming excellent friends, and friendship, she understood, was a good foundation for marriage.

Nevertheless, when her friend was announced, her predominating idea was to get rid of him as quickly as possible, in order to allow Ferrars to emerge from his somewhat ignominious retreat.

"I have only stopped for a minute," Wirdden began. He did not sit down, but stood before her on the hearth rug. "The man downstairs seemed to think you had some engagement or other, so I won't keep you." He paused, but she would not, though blessing the perspicacious footman in her heart, either affirm or deny his statement. Finding her silent, Wirdden went on: "I've had the most amusing afternoon. I've been to an auction. Did you ever go to an auction? No, I suppose not. Well, it is a function that brings out all that is worst in the human heart, and all that is quickest in the human intelligence. And this was a jewel auction—the worst kind."

Mary, who was not so abnormal as to care nothing for precious stones, began to listen with interest to his account of the cause of the sale, the history of the jewels, and descriptions of tiaras and necklaces. He was full of ideas. Presently he took out a pen-



cil and sketched her the kind of tiara he had always admired. "The kind I shall get for my wife," he explained.

It looked very lovely, and Mary could not help smiling as she replied that she hoped it would be appreciated.

"But for my semi-fiancée I bought this," he answered, suddenly, and, plunging into his pocket, he drew out a long, glittering chain of white sapphires. "I can't bear the little ribbon on which you wear your grandmother's watch."

It was a severe strain on Mary's strength of character, but she succeeded in refusing the trinket. She wanted it, she almost, she felt, needed it, but perhaps the sense of Ferrars in the next room supported her through the ordeal. Whatever the sources of her firmness, she succeeded in making Wirdden return the chain rather sadly to his pocket; and to make up for the disappointment, she found herself being, as she would have said, "nicer" to him than she had ever been before.

"Ah, well," he said, "you are probably right, though I can't see what harm it would have done under the circumstances." And then he added in a tone much lower, but clearly audible to her: "And now might not the gentleman in the next room be allowed to come out? He seems dreadfully impatient."

To say that Mary blushed hardly describes the agonizing flood of color that swept over her. That she who had been so well brought up should be found in so undignified, so nearly improper, a position! How Wirdden must despise her!

Determined to make a clean breast of it, she stammered:

"It's he—the man I told you about."

"So I supposed," he returned, smiling.

"But how did you know he was there?" she asked.

"A strong light behind him, combined with an equally strong desire to look through the curtains, betrayed him almost as soon as I came in."

"Do you mean to say he was watching—listening?"

"Let us say he was eager to see me take my departure."

"The stupid creature!" said Mary. "Oh, what must you think of him! And how you must despise me!"

"I despise myself if between us we have made you cry," he answered, taking one of her hands and patting it gently, as if she had been a child. After a minute he kissed it, and Mary, looking up, said:

"You are the most wonderfully kind person."

He laughed. "To live up to my reputation, then, I am about to take my departure, but before I go, won't you call the young man out and let me have a look at him?"

The request was not agreeable, but Mary did not feel in a position to refuse, so she called, "Mr. Ferrars," in a stern tone, that would have caused a well-trained dog to come wriggling and apologizing to her feet.

Ferrars, however, was neither a dog nor well trained, and he immediately strode into the room with contracted brows and sullen eyes.

She introduced them. Wirdden said: "I am sorry we meet only as I am going. Can I give you a lift anywhere? I have a trap here."

Ferrars made no attempt to soften his tone as he replied that it was not his intention to go as yet. The door had not closed behind Wirdden when he turned to Mary and asked with passion:

"Who is this man?"

"I told you his name when I introduced you to him."

"Oh, I know his name! I know he is a rich man, I know— But what right has he to come here and give you jewelry?"

"How do you know he did?"

"I could not help hearing, and when a long silence came, I looked to see if he were gone; and, oh, Mary, I saw him kiss your hand!"

Now, Mary was at heart a gentle person, and she said only: "I don't think you ought to have looked."

Presently, in response to his eager

inquiries; she told him something of the situation between herself and Wirdden; told him of Wirdden's proposal, and how very soon now, within three weeks, on the sixth of March, she was to decide whether—

"Whether you will marry him?" gasped Ferrars.

"No, whether I will be engaged to him or not."

Ferrars failed to grasp this fine point, but saw one thing plainly, that she was preparing to marry without love, and on this subject he had much to say.

How could she think of such a thing? She who was so pure and delicate! Well, simply she did not understand what she was doing, and she must be kept from it at all costs.

"I think probably I shan't do it. In fact, I am almost sure that I shan't," she answered, "except sometimes when I am with him I feel as if it might be—possible."

At this Ferrars broke out again. It was bad enough for her in her ignorance to think of such a thing, but for any man to be willing to take a wife on such terms—well, he must be a wretched, paltry creature. A wife as much *bought* as one of his horses. A man who would call that love—

Here Mary felt obliged to stop him. Mr. Wirdden, she explained, did not call it love. He did not pretend to love her. It was, if Mr. Ferrars would understand her, like an alliance between royalties—for mutual convenience, not love.

Ferrars stared at her. "He told you he did not love you?"

Mary bowed her head with dignity.

"Well, he lied," said Ferrars. "He does. I saw the way he looked at you."

Mary colored. "Do you really think so?" she said. "But why should he conceal it?" A smile crept over her face. "Oh, no, I'm sure you're mistaken!"

The smile was very maddening to Ferrars, who flung himself into a chair beside her and launched into a passionate declaration on his own account. He

had nothing to offer her, nothing but his love, but if she would wait for him, he would work for her. If she would only give up this hateful marriage and follow the dictates of her own heart!

"But, oh, dear," said Mary, "I don't think it would be following the dictates of my heart—marrying you, I mean. I'm not in love with you, Mr. Ferrars. I've tried to show you that I wasn't. What can I say, except that I don't think I'm ever going to fall in love at all? And you had much better go away and forget about me, especially as you seem to think I have behaved so badly, and I don't doubt you are right."

It took him some time to explain that she was an angel, and that he had never intended for an instant to blame her, but that she must make allowances for him; that he had never seen any reason for living, far less had he imagined happiness, until he had seen her, and now to have it all taken away from him by a man whom she did not even love—

His emotion was genuine, his distress extreme, and Mary's heart melted. She let him hold her hand, and though she refused to make a final break with Wirdden until the specified date—the sixth of March—arrived, she began to think that she really could not give him a favorable answer. She tried to imagine herself breaking the news of her engagement to Ferrars, and found the notion very painful. She could not bear to think of never seeing him again—the only person who had ever really loved her; the only one, at least, unless this preposterous theory of his about Wirdden were true. She determined to observe him closely at their next meeting.

That very evening she met him at a large dinner, and came to the conclusion that Ferrars' theory was absolutely false. If one cared one was jealous, and so far from being jealous after the incident of the afternoon, he seemed to have forgotten all about it. He never even referred to it. He was very attentive and amusing, but jealous! Love! No, that had been a figment of Fer-

rars' imagination—the result of his own warm feelings.

She felt, somehow, a little put out with Wirden, while her thoughts turned gratefully to the other.

## VI.

"Well, really, my dear," said Mrs. Vane, sitting propped up by pillows in her bed one morning—she had sent for Mary to talk to her; she took infinitely more interest in the girl of late—"I can't help laughing when I think what your respected parents would say if they could see your goings on. They *are* goings on, Mary, but don't misunderstand me. I approve heartily; but your father! Suppose he knew about that little *tête-à-tête* lunch downtown? Suppose he could see my boudoir taken up every day of the week with one or the other of your young men—both ineligible, one because he has too much money, and the other because he has none at all. Not but what I find your tiger-eyed friend very attractive, in a desperate sort of way."

"Do you, Cousin Flora?" said Mary, moderately, as if she herself had not quite made up her mind on the subject.

"Yes, my dear, and so do you. But what discourages me so much is that Lewis Wirden does not seem to mind his hanging about."

"I don't know how Mr. Wirden could prevent it, if he wanted to, which he doesn't," returned Mary, with admirable lucidity.

"And that shows your surprising innocence," said Mrs. Vane. "Mr. Wirden could do a number of things. He could build a house at the North Pole, and select young Ferrars as the architect. Do you suppose the boy would refuse? Not at all. He would think it was an excellent chance to lay the foundation of a fortune to support you both, and he would go, and when he came back again you would not know him by sight."

Mary found herself not a little irritated by this view of her as a mere puppet in Wirden's hands—a view man-

ifestly untrue. "Well, just for argument," she said, "let us admit your hypothesis. Then, I must say, I don't think it would be a particularly honorable way for an older man to behave—to take advantage of a younger man's natural ambition in his profession—"

"Yes," Flora interrupted, nodding her head sagely; "it may be that—a highly developed sense of honor—that leads Wirden to tolerate him; or it may be, as you say, that he does not care sixpence whether you prefer Ferrars or not; or it may be that he knows perfectly well that he can cut him out whenever he wants to. Somebody suggested to me the other day an idea that rather struck me. It was a woman; she said that Wirden had reached an age when a man wants to be married, and that you seemed to him a thoroughly suitable, unobjectionable wife."

Mary colored. This statement, so near to what she believed to be the truth, sounded peculiarly unacceptable when put into words.

"I do wish, Cousin Flora," she said, "that you would not discuss my most private affairs with any one who chooses to ask questions."

"My dear, what difference does it make whether I do or not, when everybody else does? And if you don't want your affairs to be discussed you should not carry on a flirtation with one of the most conspicuous men in New York."

"I am not carrying on a flirtation."

"I call a flirtation," said Mrs. Vane, "a noticeable friendship between a man and woman which does not end in matrimony. You told me a short time ago that Mr. Wirden was not in love with you, and so I suppose—"

"I can think of nothing so unlikely as my marrying him," Mary interrupted, and at the moment spoke truthfully. She did not know at the instant in what condition affairs might be. She had been guilty, she feared, of an act of incomparable stupidity the night before. She had had occasion to write to both Ferrars and Wirden: to Ferrars, in order to change the hour of his visit the following day from five to half-past; to Wirden, to thank him for some

gardenias. She had been haunted all day by the notion that she had put the letters in the wrong envelopes. Or, rather, the appreciation had come over her again and again of how awkward it would be if she had.

Her note to Wirden had been perfectly safe—at least, she thought so. She always tried to write him really appreciative notes whenever he sent her flowers, as he now so often did, and she did remember a sentence or two that she would be just as glad not to have Ferrars' eyes light on. But those sentences, unless her memory misled her, were over the page, and as the note began clearly "My Dear Mr. Wirden," there seemed no likelihood of its being read throughout by the wrong man.

But her letter to Ferrars, alas! did not begin with any formal appellation—fatal omission that is in itself so significant! It had begun merely: "Come at half-past five to-morrow instead of at five, as I am going to the theater with my cousin." And after that—Of course it had said nothing that she was in the least ashamed of, only she had gone on to take up one or two points in their last conversation, and had betrayed by the whole tone of her letter—which was long—how much further they had progressed toward intimacy than she had as yet led Wirden to suppose. She wished now she had been a little more explicit with him.

She was still sitting with her cousin when a knock came at the door, and a thick letter, in a hand which she recognized from afar as Wirden's, was handed to her. She held it an instant in her hand unopened, trying to think what she would do if its purpose was to put an end to the shadowy engagement between them. In ten days she intended to put an end to it herself—at least, she thought she did—but that he should do it now was painful. Retreating to a distant window, she opened it, taking out first her own note, returned, and then a few lines from him:

DEAR BUT CARELESS SEMI-FIANCEE: Please let me have my own, for I suppose you wrote to me, too. A man said to me the other day

that there was only one thing to do when you opened a letter that did not belong to you—to put it in the fire and lie about it. I hope to be rewarded for returning this and telling the truth about it by getting my own in its place. I should have kept this one if I could have persuaded myself that my memory had let slip an appointment with you. As it is, I did not go beyond the first sentence. Devotedly yours, L. W.

Her first feeling was one of intense relief. The next moment she was surprised to find she was irritated. Had this man absolutely no feeling of any kind about her? He had certainly asked her to marry him. Was it possible to suppose that he did not care at all whether she did or not? She knew he did not love her, but that was no reason why he should not feel enough attraction toward her to be a little roused by discovering that she was making engagements and writing six-page letters to another man. Not, of course, that she wanted to make him uncomfortable, but she could not help feeling it to be odd that he was not. Oh, what a delightful sight it would be to see him really in love, jealous, violent, like other men! She fell to considering what type of woman could accomplish this result, and found that in her imaginings she herself was figuring again and again in that capacity, which was palpably absurd. The task was not for her; that was proved.

She had hardly reached this conclusion when another knock was heard at the door. Mr. Ferrars was downstairs, and would be glad to see her for a moment.

"At half-past eleven in the morning, Mary!" cried Mrs. Vane. "Do tell him it isn't the hour for admirers."

Mary felt no nervousness. The great danger was past in Wirden's having returned Ferrars' note. That the latter had anything to complain of did not occur to her. She thought he had taken advantage of rather a slim opportunity to come and see her, and ask what had been in his own letter. And she would not be sorry to see him.

She should have been set right the minute she saw his narrowed eyes and erect figure, but she had started to

speak before she took in these evidences of anger.

"I thought you had given up coming during business hours," she said, gayly, but he did not answer. He held out a sheet of note paper to her.

"I have to return what is not meant for me," he said, in a voice steadied by the greatest effort.

She took it, smiling. "Was anything ever so stupid? Mr. Wirdden has just sent me back yours."

"I see," he went on, "that I have been under a misapprehension. You did not lead me to suppose that your terms with Wirdden were such as that"—he made a contemptuous gesture toward the paper—"as that indicates. I might have known better. Oh, Mary, how could you write such a letter to him—to that man?"

"You read it, I see," said Mary, and then, to refresh her memory, she read it herself:

MY DEAR MR. WIRDEN: I am so glad that as no one else ever sends me gardenias, you send them so often. There is nothing I love so much. I put them on, thinking that they mean a little more to you and me than any one supposes. Gratefully yours,

MARY.

"Well," she said, looking up, "I can't see anything to object to in that."

"Nothing, if it is a girl's letter to her fiancé," retorted Ferrars. "I only object to being kept in the dark. If you had told me that you cared for the man, or even that you thought it necessary to pretend that you did, I should not have been surprised at reading this—this love letter."

"It is not a love letter," said Mary, coloring deeply.

Evidently he knew it by heart, for he answered quickly:

"Not when you tell him you are glad that no one else is able to give you pleasure as he can; when you delight in the secret between you that makes fools of all outsiders; when you sign only your first name—just Mary?"

"I am glad to know what constitutes a love letter in your eyes. I shall be most careful in writing to you in future, and for fear I may not have been

careful enough in the letter which I wrote you last night, I'll burn it now. I am not at all sure how I did sign it;" and before he could stop her she had thrown the six sheets destined for him into the fire. "I cannot be sufficiently thankful that you did not see it," she went on. "I am afraid that I actually went so far as to say— However, there is no reason now why any one should ever know, for Mr. Wirdden's standards, it seems, do not permit him to read other people's letters."

"Why should he?" returned Ferrars, boldly. "You say yourself he does not care. Yes, I know I said he did, but I see I was wrong. He does not care at all whether I love you—no, nor whether you care for me. Why should he waste his time deciphering pages of your writing? He was probably glad to be saved the trouble. But it was everything to me to know how you wrote to him. I yielded to a temptation which, feeling as I do, no man would have resisted. He wasn't tempted. It was not honor; it was laziness."

"He never abuses you in this horrid way."

"Why should he? If he loved you I'd give him credit for being noble—and a fool; but as it is—"

Mary lost her temper at this reiteration. "You have said that quite often enough," she said. "He does not love me. He does not love me. *He does not love me.* You know it, and I know it, and he knows it. You may spare my hearing it again. It grows actually tiresome."

"The last thing in the world I wish to do is to bore you," said Ferrars, bitterly, and, without more words, left the room.

"Well," thought Mary, as she went upstairs, "there is an end of that." Yet she felt singularly little elation at the notion of being rid of one complication in her life. Her mind, leaping forward, pictured their next meeting, after some five or six years: "Mrs. Wirdden, I believe?" "No, I am still Miss Tremont." Then how would he feel?

"Hasty, unkind man!" she thought.

Perhaps she had been a little hasty, too, but certainly he had no right to read her letter, still less to comment on it.

She thought she must have a natural dislike of a quarrel, for, after the first excitement had passed, she felt singularly let down and depressed. Indeed, she could hardly be alone without finding tears in her eyes.

Being alone, however, was a menace to her peace of mind that the life she was leading seldom offered her. It was on this account, largely, that she had permitted herself to drift into the position she occupied between the two men. The recognition that her conduct was light-minded, if not actually wrong, was one which a very little thought would have achieved, but it was hidden from her by the very fact that she had so little time to think. It is possible for a life whose every action is in itself harmless to be none the less dissipated, in the most literal sense. All day long and day after day, Mary's time was filled with little pleasures, which, harmless enough in themselves, cut her off from any knowledge of herself. She had no leisure that was not filled with amusement; no responsibilities, not even her own clothes. Contemplation, the Eastern panacea, was far from her. This for a young person is the danger of a wholly social existence; this is where society is opposed to real life. It presents situation after situation in which the only demand is that we appear well. It concerns itself with what we are only in so much as it affects what we seem. It is not the medium to help the soul to know its own weaknesses.

Mary, still delighted with the success of her outward bearing, had neither time nor inclination to question, from a moral standpoint, the cause of that success. She knew that she had been ignored and neglected, and now she was sought after and petted. It had needed only the little spur of Wirden's admiration to emphasize her charms in the eyes of the world. When once attention was directed to her, no one could miss her obvious qualities: that she was

demure and daring; prim, yet provocative; gentle, yet fearless. The very simplicity of her dress—for with the exception of the red tulle Flora had not further interfered in her wardrobe—was an added piquancy to one who, as every one was saying, would soon be wearing all the jewels and finery that Wirden could heap upon his wife.

Noticeably had public opinion shifted in the weeks of Mary's semi-engagement. The world had gradually become convinced that Wirden's steadily impenetrable manner covered serious intentions. "Even poor Bessie Grey has given up hope," was a common saying. "Only," every one asked, "if he has made up his mind, why don't we hear of the engagement? Don't try to persuade me *she* is hesitating." Mrs. Vane always made the same answer: "Oh, don't ask me. Girls are so blind."

Mary might have said: "Don't ask me, either." As the date for making up her mind approached, she seemed to be more and more incapable of deciding. Did she want to announce her engagement? Oh, no! Did she want to send him away? How much less! She had never made up her mind to marry him, but she had allowed her mind to dwell so constantly upon a future in which she saw herself as his wife that every other future seemed wretched and alien. There were moments when she told herself that she had grown very fond of him, that a girl who was not fond of him must be lacking in all perception. And then, again, his strange aloofness irritated her beyond measure. If she had been a stick or a stone she could hardly have influenced him less. Yet there was always the contradictory fact that he wanted to marry her.

And it was the first of March.

## VII.

The dawning of the sixth of March was not a very happy occasion for Mary. She kept saying to herself: "This is the day for me to decide," without advancing any further in the process. All the excitement incident to



the announcement of her engagement had been discounted; people had talked as much as they could talk, and this element, which would have influenced a great many young women, and had already so largely influenced Mary, now hardly entered in at all.

She had seen and heard nothing further from Ferrars. If she agreed to accept Wirden the announcement of her engagement would certainly draw some word from the other. She wondered what it would be.

She was, of course, in full possession of what her parents would think. They had expressed themselves fully in the autumn. Her father, she thought, would be glad, and her mother, though at first difficult to reconcile to the patent-over-shoe industry, would yield in time to Wirden's personal fitness. There was no real obstacle anywhere. The question was one of Mary's own feelings, and she could not be sure what these were.

"If he were only a little less indifferent, he might have made me care," she thought, and found herself less and less patient of this indifference. Was she really so unattractive, so impossible to love? Again and again she had soothed her vanity with the thought of Ferrars' devotion; and now that was taken from her.

All the morning of the sixth she waited at home, dreading a visit from Wirden, or a message or some call for the decision she had not reached. By five o'clock in the afternoon she had such a bad attack of nerves that even her cousin noticed it.

"What is the matter with you, child? You don't keep still a moment. What or whom are you expecting?"

"Oh, nothing!" said Mary, sitting down with an appearance of calm. "I feel nervous, that's all. May I have a cup of tea?"

"It's not the best thing for nervousness."

"I think, perhaps, I won't go to the dance to-night, Cousin Flora," the girl went on, tentatively. By that time, she thought, the worst would have happened, the strain would be relaxed. One

way or the other, she felt she would relish being absolutely alone.

One noticeable feature of all forms of human anxiety seems to be its power to extend itself indefinitely. We say to ourselves: "In three weeks I shall have to know," or: "In an hour this must be decided," and time goes on without bringing the crisis, leaving us as undecided as before.

Mary might say to herself that before eleven that evening her fate would be settled, but, as a matter of fact, six o'clock struck, and seven, and no Wirden appeared.

Could he have forgotten?

Well, that was the final insult. She thought, with scorn, of her agonizing day; while he—

Just before she went out to dinner a florist's box arrived, and with the flowers a card on which was written:

If you have not forgotten that we have something to talk over, save a few dances for me this evening.

A more reckless spirit presently took hold of her. She was wearing her famous red ball dress, and she was wonderfully supported by the knowledge that she was looking extremely well. She managed to enjoy her dinner between two agreeable men, and about eleven went on to the dance with a sort of desperate courage.

The ball was given at one of the few private houses in New York large enough for a general party, and this was not general, by any means. If all the families of the hostess' acquaintance were represented, care had been taken to select the younger and best-looking members.

The ballroom, all lights and mirrors and shining parquet, was decorated in gold and carving that had been imported bodily from a French palace; here and there a new panel that had been inserted to fill in showed by contrast the beauty of the old. Mirrors were set in every available space, adding tremendously to the apparent size of the great room. The electric-light fixtures were adapted from old chandeliers and appliques of hanging

bunches of grapes in cut glass. Beyond the ballroom was a serious-looking red room in which card tables were set out for the benefit of inveterate bridge players, and beyond this was the library, and back of this the conservatory, cool, dark and pervaded with the sounds of a trickling fountain.

Even after she arrived, Mary felt comparatively light-hearted. Wirdden was nowhere to be seen, and she danced with man after man, betraying no other sign of anxiety than an occasional rapid glance at the doorway.

Shortly before midnight, however, one of these furtive glances was arrested by the sight, not of Wirdden, but of Ferrars, who stood gazing upon her with folded arms.

He went out very little. Mary had never sought to discover whether this was from necessity or choice. She only recognized the fact that she never expected to see him unless he came to see her, and now this vision of him among the other men in the doorway was a distinct surprise.

She would have said beforehand that if they met again, she doubted if he would speak to her, but this delusion was quickly dispelled, for as soon as he caught her eye she knew that he was waiting, and waiting impatiently, for her to stop dancing and give him an opportunity to approach her.

She did not finish the turn. She stopped, talking quickly all the while to her partner about the music and the people, aware that Ferrars had separated himself from the other men and was crossing the room toward her.

Presently he stood before her and asked her to dance. She consented in silence, and in silence they began to dance.

It occurred to Mary that he did not mean to speak to her, that after their long waltz he would depart as he had come. She was aware that he knew the critical nature of the day. Perhaps this was merely his form of farewell. Certainly she herself had no impulse to break the silence between them.

But his intention was different. When the music stopped he drew her hand

within his arm, and led her, as one who had already looked over the ground and knew his way, to the conservatory.

Established there, he said: "The sixth of March will be over in fifteen minutes. What was your answer?"

Mary bent her head and replied, in rather a small voice, that she could not answer that question.

"What do you mean? Oh, I see! That I must content myself by learning of your engagement when it is announced."

This seemed too cruel a meaning to attribute to any one. Mary quickly repudiated it. "I meant," she said, "that I have not given my answer as yet."

This admission of the chaos of her mind, which seemed to her the most humiliating confession of weakness, was to him nothing but a sign that his last chance had not yet slipped from him. He began to plead with all the ardor and egotism of a young man for the first time really stirred. He urged her to refuse Wirdden, he painted the horrors of such a marriage. He pleaded his own love, and pleaded well.

There is no knowing what the effect would have been on Mary, who was unquestionably moved, had he not yielded to an unlucky impulse and in the midst of her most melting mood leaned forward and kissed her.

An instant later he had the conservatory to himself.

She was deeply outraged. If it seems strange that a girl who could play so lightly with the feelings of two men could yet retain intact the standards of her bringing up, it must be remembered that Mary had hardly realized the meaning of her attitude toward Wirdden and Ferrars. Like most human weaknesses, she had drifted into her present position in regard to them through sheer lack of appreciation of what she was doing. She had never once consciously violated the code instilled into her since childhood, except in the single instance of accepting the ring from Wirdden, and this incident, as a matter of fact, preyed far more upon her mind than the knowledge that she was going to make Ferrars unhappy.

This seems, oddly enough, to be one of the direct results of the strict and sheltered system of bringing up. Youth is shown so clearly the danger of certain tangible symbols, that it hardly has time to guard against the evils for which those symbols stand. Two things Mary had accepted unreservedly: she must never let a man kiss her; she must never let a man give her jewelry, unless she was engaged to him.

And now she had committed both of these crimes, and the worst of it was, the culprits were different men in each case. She did not consider the right or wrong of the course of conduct that had engendered the attitudes of mind of which these actions were the outcome. In fact, she considered nothing. She was vaguely aware that something dreadful had happened.

For the moment she hated Ferrars as she had never hated any one, with a fury that surprised herself.

She had gone only a few steps out of the conservatory when she met Wirdden, who, if not looking for her, had the good manners to look as if he were.

"What in the world are you doing wandering about by yourself?" he said, and she answered without an instant's hesitation:

"Trying to find you—at least, hoping I'd find you. I want to tell you that I do want to be really engaged to you, and I want to announce it at once. Oh, not to-night, of course, but just as soon as possible. Oh, don't tell me you have changed your mind!"

"No," said Wirdden; "I have not changed my mind."

"Well, of course, if you don't want to—"

"I want to understand, that's all. Why are you in such haste to announce our engagement? As far as I am concerned, the sooner the better."

"Oh!" said Mary, hoping to relieve his mind, "I don't want to be married soon, not for ages and ages, indeed, but I do want every one to know that we are engaged; and I'd rather you did not ask why."

Wirdden looked thoughtful. "Will you come and sit out with me some-

where, Mary?" he said, and his eyes strayed toward the conservatory. Mary drew back hastily.

"Oh, no, thank you, I'm going home," she answered. "I am tired, and there is nothing else to say, is there?"

"I had fancied that there were one or two things," said he. "Your parents' consent, for instance."

Plainly Mary had forgotten all about this detail—an omission that seemed to argue that her decision was of recent date.

"Couldn't we telegraph?" she suggested. "Writing would take so long." She could not bear to delay this telling blow to Ferrars, this direct response to his outrageous conduct.

Wirdden, as usual, entered into her idea without questions.

"I am afraid we must wait for a letter, though," he said. "For several, perhaps, if they need persuasion; unless," he added, looking at her interrogatively, "you would like me to go out to California and see them?"

"Oh, do, do!" cried Mary, enthusiastically. "What an excellent idea that is! And if my mother does object, you would soon be able to convert her."

The compliment did not seem to give Wirdden any very great pleasure. He continued to look very grave.

"You know I should be gone at least three weeks," he said.

"Well," she returned, looking at the bright side, "I should just have to wait to tell people until after you got back." Then, perceiving that her answer had somehow failed to please, she added: "Don't you want to go? I suppose it would interfere with your business."

"My business is going to be doing what you want," he answered.

By this time they had walked together as far as the great stairway—marble with bronze railings—and here they paused.

"There is one thing," Mary began, with some embarrassment. "Do you think there would be any harm in my telling one—just one—person before you came back? And then," she added, persuasively, "you wouldn't have to hurry so."

"I was thinking about asking the same thing of you," he returned. "For, of course, it is entirely for you to say. Only, I must point out to you that engagements are always being announced prematurely by intimate girl friends."

"Oh, this isn't a girl friend!" said Mary, eagerly; at which he laughed, and she, feeling a little disconcerted, held out her hand.

"Good-night," she said.

He took her hand and held it. "Oh, Mary," he said, gently, "if you only liked me a little better!"

She drew back, justly angered. "I like that!" she retorted. "I like you quite as well as you like me."

"Do you?" he answered, relapsing into his more usual manner. "Then I have nothing to complain of."

With that she left him, knowing quite well that he watched her up the whole length of the stairs to the upper story, where her wraps were.

"Does he suppose I am likely to care about him, when he doesn't want me to?" she said to herself, adding that he would soon find out his mistake if he had any such notion.

But as she drove home she wished she had asked him who it was to whom he wished to confide his engagement. Then she fell to composing a letter to Ferrars.

## VIII.

Wirden did not set off actually the next day, but within an incredibly short time he was on his way to California—a journey which, in the eyes of his acquaintances, was almost as significant as a formal announcement.

As soon as he arrived, Mary had a telegram from him:

Consent without enthusiasm.

Later a letter from her mother reached her:

MY DEAR CHILD: Mr. Wirden reached here yesterday, bringing your letter. Your father and I have decided that we have no adequate reason for withholding our consent to your engagement. Indeed, I would not distress you by mentioning our reluctance, were it not you and I had discussed the subject

so thoroughly in the autumn, when you felt as I did. I will not, however, interfere with the dictates of your heart. As you have chosen him, I will not oppose you. Of course I could have wished that you had chosen some one a little nearer to your own class of life. If you could have fallen in love with a son of one of my old friends, I should have been very happy. As it is, however, I must admit that I should never have suspected Mr. Wirden's origin if I had not already known it. And it is, of course, a matter of great satisfaction to your father and me that your husband will always be able to support you in the comfort to which you have been accustomed.

"The comfort to which I have been accustomed! Fifteen millions! Poor, dear mother!" thought Mary, recognizing how far she had traveled since "patent overshoes" seemed quite as insurmountable a barrier to her as to her mother.

Wirden was expected back almost immediately. She was surprised to find what a change had taken place in her daily life since his departure. It was infinitely less amusing. But then, she remembered, Ferrars' society had also been withdrawn from her.

She had written to Ferrars at once, telling him the bare fact of her engagement. To this she had had no answer for more than a week. Then he wrote formally, wishing her happiness, and adding that in two weeks he expected to sail for Paris, where he was going to study for an indefinite number of years, and might he be allowed to see her before he went?

This was not the sort of note Mary had pictured to herself. It was, in a way, singularly unsatisfactory. She had expected a passionate remonstrance, a bitter prophecy of her future life, something, at least, that would give her an opportunity to point out how hopelessly his own conduct had put him outside the pale of friendship. She felt, besides, conscience-stricken at being the cause of this sudden journey. He was, she knew, the only man in his family. Great things were hoped of the position he now held in Mr. Reece's office, which, evidently, he was abandoning merely in order to escape her neighborhood. She felt conscience-stricken, but

at the same time she noted that the letter contained no hint of penitence.

After some inward debate, she wrote back that at present Mr. Wirden was away; after his return her engagement would be formally announced, and then she would be very glad to see Mr. Ferrars and wish him good-by—granted, of course, that Mr. Wirden had no objection.

This letter was met by total silence.

On his return, Wirden was to come straight to her from the train. He looked tired, she thought, and rather depressed until he spoke and his face changed and brightened. Before his arrival she had been debating with alarm the manner of their meeting. She knew what was expected of long-parted fiancés. What would be his ideas? Nevertheless, the cool friendliness of his greeting left her rather chilled.

"I've missed you," she said, perversely—"missed you more than I meant to. Have you missed me?"

"It's difficult to miss any one when traveling at the rate at which I've been traveling," he answered. She turned from him in annoyance she intended him to see, but he went on calmly:

"Your parents were really charming. Your mother frankly hates the rubber business, but she has schooled herself to hope that I will make you a good husband."

"It has a horrid sound," said Mary, who had not recovered her temper. "A good husband!"

"Well, perhaps I shan't," returned he, soothingly. "As for your father, he really likes me, although he regards it as a distinct evidence of weakness on his part. He is always trying to explain it satisfactorily. They say, by the way, that we may announce our engagement on the tenth of April. That will give your mother time to notify your relations. In the meantime, Mary, I want you to come down with Mr. and Mrs. Vane and spend Sunday at my place. I should like you to see it, for I suppose you will spend a good deal of your time there. We shan't have a party, shall we? Mrs. Hyllis, an old friend of mine, and Mr. Ferrars——"

"And who?" asked Mary, suddenly interrupted in profound consideration concerning the mention of Mrs. Hyllis.

Wirden smiled. "I stopped for my letters at the club," he said, "and among them was a communication from your young friend. It seems, my dear Mary, that you have been keeping him waiting for an answer to a very simple request, and so he quite rightly applied to me. He wrote me a very straightforward note. Very spirited behavior, I call it."

"May I see it?" said Mary, holding out her hand, and again fearing that she had cause for doubting her knowledge of the opposite sex.

Wirden took out a packet of letters, and, turning them over—Mary could not help seeing that one was in a feminine hand—held out one to her. It said:

MY DEAR MR. WIRDEN: In view of the slightness of our acquaintance, I should not venture to write to you, were it not that I understand that my only hope of securing an interview with Miss Tremont is to be obtained through you. I am sailing for Europe on the ninth of April, and shall not return to this country for several years. As I have made no secret of my feelings for Miss Tremont, and as I shall very probably never see her again, I hope you will allow me this privilege. I remain, sir,

Very truly yours,  
GREY FERRARS.

"Have you answered this?"

"I wrote and asked him to stay with me over the seventh, and mentioned who I hoped my other guests would be."

She looked at him solemnly. "Lewis," she said, and it was the first time she had used his first name, "why did you ask him?"

"Well," he answered, "it was a very straightforward letter, and certainly he never has made any secret of how he felt toward you, and somehow I have a feeling that if you marry me he very likely never *will* see you again, and, most of all, I do not want to have you remembering at the altar that you let him sail without saying good-by to him."

"He wants to see me again in order

to make me change my mind about marrying you. Do you know that?"

"I suppose so; but you cannot imagine that I should prefer to think that only by my forbidding a final interview with him did you become my wife?"

"But suppose that I never do become your wife? Suppose I break my engagement?"

He meditated. "It would not be such a bad idea for us to start fresh, would it?"

"Who is Mrs. Hyllis?" asked Mary, not as irrelevantly as her question sounded.

"The widow of one of my oldest friends, and a very charming woman."

"Was it to her that you wished to tell your engagement?"

"I did not ask that of you."

"I am not as indifferent as you are," she answered. "Besides, I suppose you knew."

He admitted that he probably did.

He left her, as of late he usually had left her, in a state of strangely mingled excitement and disappointment.

"He might at least pretend to like me a little," she thought.

As the day for the public announcement of their engagement approached, she began to find herself embarrassed, as she appreciated how different was his state of mind to that usually credited to fiancés. And yet, whichever way she made up her mind about him, something immediately happened to change it. After their semi-engagement had originally gone into effect, one of his first requests had been for a photograph of her, and she had one, and only one, taken for him. She had almost forgotten this until a letter from her mother revealed the fact that he had taken it with him to California. Was this indifference?

Besides, the evening of the ball, as he had watched her the length of that whole long flight of stairs, she had gained an impression that she hesitated to put into words—that her consent had moved him more than he had been willing to show.

And yet he had asked his only rival

to stay where she was coming. And how in the world, she asked herself, was she to meet Ferrars, particularly in the presence of Warden? Of course Warden did not know what had occurred. What would he say, she wondered, if she told him? Probably he would not care. And now whatever happened was his own fault.

In her heart she admired his conduct; there was nothing small, nothing suspicious, about it. Ferrars, she thought, would have been incapable of it. It seemed to her an encouraging index of the freedom she was to enjoy, the confidence he would place in her in the future.

"Why so thoughtful, my love?" said her cousin's voice at her shoulder. "I'd have come in here long ago, but I thought Mr. Warden was with you."

"He has just gone. I think you won't be surprised, Cousin Flora, to hear that we are engaged."

"My dear Mary! Really? No, of course I'm not surprised, and yet, in a way, I am, too. Well, after all, it pays to be prim. You are prim, you know, Mary. And yet, what an education it must be to be made love to by a man like that! The mere idea of it makes me quite discontented with Ned."

Mary felt her heart sink at this unfortunate reference. She was half inclined to fling herself into her cousin's arms and say plainly: "Oh, he doesn't make love to me! Tell me why not?" But, of course, she did no such thing. She merely observed that Mr. Warden was the most considerate of men.

"Considerate, my dear!" said Mrs. Vane. "Anyhow, one can be considerate with fifteen millions. He is attractive, and that is much harder. How do your parents take it? I'll be bound they feel he is hardly up to your merits. Dear Cousin Sarah! Oh, Mary, there are certain people I do so long to tell! When is it to be announced?"

"Not for ten days. In the meantime, Cousin Flora, Mr. Warden wants us—you and me and Cousin Ned—to go down and spend Sunday at his place. Will you go?"



"Have I ever stood in your light? Of course I will. Any one else?"

Mary hesitated, and then, remembering that her cousin would eventually have to know the whole party, she answered:

"No one but Mrs. Hyllis and Mr. Ferrars."

It was disconcerting to have Mrs. Vane break out into irrepressible laughter.

"I have never heard of such a combination in all my life," she said. "Ten years hence if he invited such a party one would understand—but now! May I ask whose idea it was? Or was it a compromise between two ideas? The yellow-eyed one and Mrs. Hyllis! Have you ever even seen Mrs. Hyllis, Mary?"

"Never," said Mary, rather coldly.

"No, she has gone nowhere since the death of her husband. Why should she, when all his friends come so often to her? Who wouldn't give one husband for five of his friends, and those the most delightful men in New York? If one must be a widow, one would choose to lose a man who had had good taste in his masculine companions. I don't want to poison your mind, but—Well, I hope you will be sufficiently taken up with your last farewells to young Ferrars. That is what he is asked for, isn't it?"

"I'm not of a very jealous disposition," said Mary, laughing contemptuously.

"Don't say that generally, my dear, after your engagement is announced, for it means—"

"What?" asked Mary.

"Simply that you have never been in love," returned Mrs. Vane.

## IX.

Wirden's house—the "rubber palace," as his friends were fond of calling it—stood in the most hilly and least populated country within forty miles of New York. The house itself was of brick, built after the Elizabethan manner, but the grounds, fortunately, had been laid out with very little respect to any period, and with a great deal of

feeling for the natural beauties of the place. April was not, perhaps, the time of year best suited to show off its lawns and gardens, but, on the other hand, budding trees and hazy spring days did not leave the place at its worst.

The Vanes and Mary arrived at the little station about five o'clock on Friday afternoon. Wirden was there to meet them, and in her own pleasure at seeing him, Mary was prepared to swear that some similar emotion stirred in him. It was just an instant, just a look and a change of expression, and then it all passed, as he turned to speak to Mrs. Vane.

"None of your other guests on this train," that lady was saying, briskly.

"No," said Wirden; "Ferrars does not come until just before dinner, and Mrs. Hyllis, I am happy to say, made a mistake in trains and arrived an hour ago."

"What an unfortunate mistake!" said Flora, glancing at Mary.

"Unfortunate for her," returned Wirden, "for that early train is very slow, but uncommonly lucky for me. I have been here since Wednesday without a soul to speak to."

His manner was perfectly candid; but then did Mary need proof that he had a certain aptitude for concealment? It was not for nothing that he had so often whispered to her of their most profound secrets, while to an outsider he seemed to be discussing nothing more intimate than the weather. The strange peace and satisfaction that had come over her from the moment that she had been established beside him in the carriage suddenly left her. She felt rather homesick. She almost thought she might have been happier at home. She found herself thinking of widows as of a sphinxlike, hostile band. She wondered what it would feel like to be a notoriously neglected wife. This idea presented itself for the first time.

Mrs. Hyllis did not appear at five o'clock tea, which was waiting for them at the house. Mr. and Mrs. Vane, with the unconcealed motive of leaving the lovers to themselves, disappeared as soon as they had set down their cups.

Mary made an agonized attempt to detain her cousin, but made it in vain. She felt vaguely embarrassed as the door closed behind them, and busied herself adding cream to her second cup of tea. When she looked up from this, she found Wirden regarding her with a smile not altogether happy.

"Why do you mind so much?" he asked.

"Mind what?" she returned, weakly.

"Mind being left alone with me. Have I not shown myself to be discreet? Am I not to be trusted?"

"Oh, it isn't being left alone with you!" she answered, eagerly. "I don't mind that a bit. In fact," she added, with one of those little bursts of confidence that might equally well have been candor or coquetry, "I like it. You are always so—so nice. But you must see what it is that I do mind. I hate to think that they think we shall—shall talk differently the instant their backs are turned."

"And yet," said Wirden, "we do."

She laughed. It was quite true. "Still, not in the way they expect," she said. "There is something so vulgar, I think, in the assumption that fiancés behave differently when they are alone, to what they do in public."

"And yet they do," Wirden returned again. He was looking preternaturally grave. She had risen and was collecting her veil and gloves and cardcase preparatory to going upstairs.

"After all," he continued, "mistaken as they are, I don't think you ought to blame them. Imagine their point of view. They know we have not seen each other for three days. They believe that I have been bored and irritated beyond measure in the interval. They probably suppose that I have been saying to myself all day: 'At five o'clock the girl I love will be here, here in the very house where I am going to have her for the rest of my life.' They think that when I saw you on the platform just now I exercised the greatest self-control in not taking you in my arms then and there, and that at this moment"—he took a step that brought him close to her—"I am only restrained

by these confounded men coming in for the tea things."

It was quite true. Mary, looking over her shoulder, saw that two noiseless beings had entered and were removing the tray.

She took advantage of the interruption to depart. At the same time she wondered not a little how the sentence would have ended, or, rather, she wondered whether it would have ended differently. He certainly had represented the world's point of view with the most sympathetic imagination, and she almost wished the tea things had been allowed to stand a little longer.

Sympathy and imagination, she thought. He certainly had both. He would be a delightful companion to a woman who loved him—to any woman, indeed. As she shut the door of her own room—that moment of peculiar intimacy with oneself, particularly in a strange house—she realized with overwhelming force all that in a few months might be hers. It would be her house, her servants, her tea things, her house party. And what a pleasant, competent host would share them with her!

So absorbing was this line of thought that she had almost finished dressing before she remembered that in a few minutes she was to meet Ferrars again. She had no idea how she meant to treat him. She might, indeed, have forgotten the important fact altogether if she had not heard wheels under her window and the sounds of his arrival.

She thought it would be easier for all concerned if she could meet him first alone. He was so unfortunately apt to show his feelings. The same idea, she thought, would undoubtedly occur to him, and as she descended to the library several minutes ahead of the dinner hour, she had no doubt that she would find him waiting for her.

From the stairs she could see a pair of masculine legs—the doorway cut off the rest of the figure—but when she entered she found they belonged to Wirden, and that he was not alone. Mrs. Hyllis was sitting in a low chair by the fire.

She was a woman of thirty-five, and

looked no less; but her beauty seemed to have grown only more dangerous in showing some signs of wear. Her thick, dark hair was done in a great coil at the back of her neck, and seemed for some reason to emphasize the hollows under her eyes and in her cheeks. Her eyes had the vague and quiet look of a woman who is taken up with a great sorrow or a tremendous love affair. She was dressed in black, which, though it did not become her complexion, suited admirably the impression of mystery that she gave. Now she wore a closely fitting black velvet, very plain against her neck and arms.

She was certainly a handsome woman. Was this the old friend to whom he had felt it necessary to confide his engagement? This important question would be decided if Mrs. Hyllis began a sentence of congratulation, and Mary waited almost breathlessly to hear her opening words. But for a few moments she said nothing. She continued to sit looking at the fire, as if this had long been her occupation, and then, finding that no one else took up the conversation, she observed that every one was more punctual in a bachelor's house than in one run by a woman. "Look at me," she said, "ready ten minutes before dinner. I don't know when such a thing has happened to me before. But you are going to have one late guest, Lewis. Who was the young man I met arriving just as I came down—a good-looking young person, a perfect *jeune premier*?"

Mary was annoyed to find herself coloring, but no one seemed to notice. Wirdden explained briefly his name and occupation.

"He has a secret sorrow," said Mrs. Hyllis, with conviction.

"Well, a man of twenty-three who hasn't—" returned Wirdden.

"You hadn't, Lewis."

"My dear Fanny, hadn't you just wed another?"

Mary studied them. A joke was one thing, of course; but was this a joke?

"Ferrars," said Mrs. Hyllis, reflectively. "I don't think I ever heard you mention his name."

"It is only lately that circumstances have thrown us a good deal together."

Mary wondered how she ever had had or ever could have confidence in one who understood a baffling manner so perfectly.

Presently the Vanes came down, and last of all Ferrars, and they immediately went in to dinner.

At table she sat between Wirdden and her cousin, Ned, and found, fortunately, that she was not expected to talk. Flora and Mrs. Hyllis filled up the pauses. She had expected to be put beside Ferrars, and, without particularly desiring this arrangement, she had composed several sentences that would convey to him what her attitude was to be, without telling it to any one else. When she saw him sitting opposite her, she asked herself if it were to be Wirdden's scheme to keep them apart. She almost smiled. The idea of his connivance was for some reason not wholly disagreeable.

It was an idea, however, that was quickly dissipated. As soon as coffee and liqueurs had been disposed of, bridge was proposed. The Vanes, Mrs. Hyllis and Wirdden at once sat down at the little green table, leaving Ferrars and Mary little chance of escaping a *tête-à-tête*, even if they wished to.

From the ease with which they immediately drifted into a remote window seat, it seemed that they were not absolutely opposed to the situation.

Ferrars began without loss of time:

"I am not going to waste the last few hours that I shall ever be with you in apologizing. I want you to forgive me, but if you can't, you can't. Perhaps if you did it would make it harder to leave you."

"You really expect to live indefinitely in Paris?"

"Yes, if the ship doesn't founder on the way, as I wish to Heaven it would!"

These terrible evidences of her own power alarmed Mary.

"I wish you wouldn't go," she said. "I can very easily keep out of your way. I can't bear to think of your leaving your mother, and giving up such a good position as you have with

Mr. Reece, just because you find it disagreeable to be on the same side of the water with me."

"Do you suppose I want to stay and finish the Vanes' ballroom? I hope I may never see the place again."

"You make me very unhappy when you talk so violently," said Mary.

"I can't save you from being unhappy," he returned, and then added, desperately: "Oh, Mary, the future you have before you with this man! I grant you he appears well enough, but I ask you to look at his conduct!"

"You must not talk like that of him," said Mary, coldly. "I am engaged to him. And," she could not resist adding, "it seems to me that his conduct to you, at least, has been most generous, asking you down here."

Ferrars turned and looked at her with a surprise that was almost an interruption in itself. "You can twist even that into something noble?" he said.

"Twist it?"

"You don't see that it is the most selfish, the most designing, the most unworthy— Well, never mind. I must not forget that I am the fellow's guest."

Perhaps he was aware that he had gone too far to draw back. He did not, at least, look very reluctant when Mary pointed this out to him.

"You must tell me what you mean," she said. "What motive could he possibly have but the wish to let you see me again, if you wanted to?"

"Didn't he need another man for his party? Do you think he was particularly concerned to find one who would be congenial to Mrs. Hyllis? Or was it, rather, some one who would take up your time?"

"Mr. Ferrars!"

"I ask you."

As he said, he merely asked, but her own memory plainly supplied the answer. The early train taken by the widow, their common punctuality for dinner, the verdict of the world, as she had heard it from Mrs. Vane. How stupid she had been!

Well, it was a dangerous game. One might drive a girl further than one

meant to. If Ferrars were asked to take up her time, he should take it up.

He continued to whisper to her in the window seat, finding her at first silent, possibly abstracted, but more gently approachable than he had ever known her. His imagination was fired to picture a hasty secret wedding, and his sailing not alone. If her sweet silence had lasted another instant he would have urged this plan upon her, but at this moment the bridge table was pushed back. The players rose, still talking of their mistakes and successes.

The whole party now drifted into the library. Here there were alcoves for the convenience of the student, and during the general discussion of first editions and rare folios, Mary found herself alone with Warden in one of these recesses.

"Have I been generous enough to this boy?" he said. "Will you drive with me to-morrow morning? Mayn't I have an hour or two? I don't think that is very grasping."

Mary hesitated, surprised to find that she was casting about for an excuse for accepting.

"I should like to show you the place," he went on.

"Don't you think I shall see quite enough of it before I die?"

"Something, you know, is expected of fiancés."

The dignity of an excuse was furnished to her. She shrugged her shoulders. "Oh, if it is expected of us, let us drive together, by all means!" she said. "I would not disappoint our friends for the world. How punctilious you are about observing all the forms! Good-night."

Once in her room, however, she fell to meditating whether it was really duty or inclination that had led to his invitation and to her acceptance. She considered, too, whether Ferrars would understand the necessity of her spending a little of her time with her betrothed. A knock came at her door and simultaneously her cousin entered.

"My dear Mary," she said, "I've come to tell you what a charming house it is that you are going to preside over.

You'll have your rooms on the south side, of course. The view is better. I'll come and stay as often as you ask me. But just a word of a vice, my dear. May I?"

"Of course," said Mary, trying to speak cordially.

"Dear child, be a little more easy-going. If you could have seen your face at dinner! Of course, if you marry a man in his position, you must give him a little latitude. I don't say there was ever an atom of harm in it, but you must realize that she is the only woman who has ever had any influence with him. It isn't to be expected that he should absolutely ignore her just because he is engaged. There isn't a bit of use in being jealous. Oh, yes, my dear, you are jealous, very naturally; but haven't you, after all, the very best proof possible that he loves you? He has asked you to marry him. You can afford to let him soothe her in any way he thinks best."

"Cousin Flora, believe me, I am not jealous."

"My dear Mary, I don't think you spoke once at dinner, and you looked positively pale with jealousy. But I only ask you to consider how she was feeling, or will when she knows, if he hasn't summoned the courage to tell her yet. Let him soften the blow, if he likes. And, above all things, don't try to hit back. Nothing is such a mistake, particularly with a man like that. It is too dangerous. You may think you have excuse, but that makes it all the worse. The more they have, the more they want. Because his own affairs have become rather complicated, he will insist the more that his wife's should be perfectly simple. They will never forgive the slightest attention to any one but themselves; so don't let young Ferrars whisper in your ear through another evening. I watched Lewis Wirden closely, and he never once glanced in your direction, which wasn't natural, and shows he did not like the way you were going on. We dine out, though, to-morrow evening, so there won't be any opportunity, and then, thank Heaven, the young gentle-

man takes himself off! Don't try to hit back, Mary. You would wound Mr. Wirden more than you meant to."

She left Mary staring blankly at the floor. Could she be jealous? Was it possible to be jealous of a man you did not love? Had he really so much as noticed her conduct? Was it conceivable that she could inflict some of this same discomfort on him? But no, had she not already done everything that would excite a man's jealousy, if he were susceptible to such an emotion? How could she go further in this direction, except to ask him to release her? She would fancy the cool courtesy with which he would immediately set her at liberty. Perhaps, indeed, she thought bitterly, it was for this result he was striving.

If there were any chance of his arguing and expostulating with her, as Ferrars would have done under the circumstances, she might have been tempted to precipitate one scene—to break her engagement merely for the pleasure of seeing him once roused. But he would be quite calm and attentive. He would deny any wish on his part to break the engagement, and very likely she would not have sufficient courage to make the break final by declaring her own unalterable desire to be free.

Across these stern imaginings came the recollection of his look when they met at the station, and of other looks and words since then. Her mind dwelt longer on these than on the words of wisdom her cousin had so conscientiously sown.

## X.

The next morning the neat little ladies' maid—who was wife to the butler and ruled the household with a rod of iron—brought in Mary's breakfast tray at an hour noticeably early. Beside her plate was a note from Wirden, which begged her, in view of the beauty of the morning, to come down before the others were about, and be off for a drive with him.

It was one of those wonderful days that early April can give us. A pale

blue sky shaded to lilac at the horizon, to meet the purple of the woods, still leafless, but beginning to promise leaves. The air was mild, summer-like, except for a little freshness in the wind. The early morning sun shone hotly enough to suggest a future of awnings and darkened shutters.

Wirdden was waiting for her when she came down. All her perplexities of the night before seemed to have disappeared. She was inclined to think she had been very imaginative. After all, what could outsiders know of such an extraordinary relation as this?

He was standing in the hall waiting for her, with his heavy driving gloves already pulled on, and turned to greet her with so pleasant a smile that she found herself smiling back quite as unreservedly.

A chestnut—hackney in build, trotter in pace—was standing before the door in a light runabout. And when they had stepped in and were whirling down the avenue, neither, it is to be feared, remembered to wonder what might be the feelings of a young gentleman roused from sleep by the sound of wheels, who, looking from his window, discreetly sheltered behind the curtain, saw his beloved driving gayly away in the sunlight with another, at an hour when most of the world is sleeping.

Enjoying the exhilaration of speed and the early morning—an exhilaration which Mary felt sure he shared—she was quite aware of thinking that there was no reason why she should not drive with him this way every morning of her life.

And as if in answer to these thoughts he began to talk to her about their life: where they should live, where they should go. Italy? Egypt? Had she been abroad lately? No, not since she was fifteen, and then only to learn French and German—a month in Tours, a month in Dresden. Oh, well, they would not try to learn anything, except how to amuse themselves. He himself confessed to a great fondness for the Nile. Greece was not yet spoiled. Had she ever been in Venice? She found herself very enthusiastic at

the suggestion, though she added that she supposed he had been to all these places time and again.

Yes, he had, but not with her.

It was not the first time, as we have seen, that she had said to herself that he was a pleasant companion; but it was the first time she had realized how pleasant a thing life with him might be.

When they came back, though it was quite half-past eleven, the rest of the party were still sitting over the breakfast table, and they set up a chorus of reproaches to those who insisted on getting up at sunrise and disturbing the slumbers of the weary by laughter under their windows.

"Priggish, that's what I call it," said Mrs. Vane, "to get up at any such hour."

"And now, you see, you are quite out of a job for the rest of the morning," said Mrs. Hyllis.

"I," said Ned, "wouldn't get up at that hour to drive with the loveliest woman in the world."

"Well, you see, I would," said Wirdden, which, in the very presence of Mrs. Hyllis, was so satisfactory a speech that Mary could not refrain from smiling, until she caught sight of Ferrars' blanched and outraged countenance. She had forgotten all about him.

His strained tones, however, would have soon recalled her. Addressing Wirdden, he inquired about trains. It was, he said, with a slight explanatory wave of his hand toward a pile of letters beside his plate, necessary that he reach New York that night. He said he regretted this sudden change of plan; but, as a matter of fact, he was at no pains to conceal the true reason for his departure.

As usual, Wirdden appeared to see nothing but what he was meant to see. He expressed great regret.

"Couldn't you possibly wait until tomorrow morning?" he said. "There is an excellent early train. And our hostess of this evening will be dreadfully put out at your loss. We are all dining most formally at the McFarlanes', you know."



"I am afraid I cannot wait, unless there is a train to-night," said Ferrars, who had studied the time-table carefully and assured himself there was none.

"No, there isn't on this railroad," said Wirden, "but if you don't mind making a night of it, there is a fairly good train a little after midnight on a line about twelve miles from here. I could send you over in the motor after we get back from dinner."

Plainly Ferrars would have liked to say that this wouldn't do, either, but, seeing that he was committed, he consented, and Wirden was heard to give his orders to the chauffeur.

The vision of his going away rejected, deserted, forgotten, in the middle of the night, so worked upon Mary's feelings that she found tears in her eyes, and who knows what folly of consolation she might have attempted had he shown any disposition to be alone with her?

There were, indeed, no more *tête-à-têtes* that day. They sat about together until luncheon. Afterward, Mrs. Hyllis, having expressed a wish to ride, was dispatched with Ned and Ferrars—much to Mary's satisfaction, for she fancied that the widow had expected to be escorted by her host, and by no one else. Mrs. Vane announced her intention of seeing the place, the stables, the hothouses—everything; Wirden offered to escort her, and Mary was very glad to be included in the party.

In one of the rose houses, when Mrs. Vane was engaged in questioning the gardener, Wirden had a word alone with the girl.

"The wagonette won't hold us all this evening," he said, "and I've ordered the brougham, too. Will you drive over with me in that? Is that permissible?"

Mary replied that she feared it wouldn't be, her cousin would not approve; but perhaps in her heart she was influenced by a distaste to giving so severe a parting pang to Ferrars.

She went to dress for dinner very well content with her day, and before she came down the whole party, with

the exception of Mrs. Hyllis, was waiting.

She heard Wirden arranging with Ned that they two should go over in the brougham, so that they might indulge in a cigarette without injuring feminine sensibilities.

"Mrs. Hyllis is late," said Flora, who knew they were dining with a punctual hostess.

Wirden agreed cordially. "She isn't often late," he said; "but we should have started ten minutes ago."

Mrs. Hyllis' maid was now seen descending the stairs, with a message to say that her mistress had felt faint while dressing and begged that they would start without her; she could not be ready for fifteen minutes. Mrs. Vane sprang up, offering to go to the sufferer, but the maid was firm. Mrs. Hyllis desired that no one should be disturbed. They would all go, please, and send the carriage back for her.

"That is absurd," said Wirden at once. "It's five miles. There is nothing to do but for all of you to go, and I'll wait until Mrs. Hyllis is better, and bring her after you in the brougham."

It was a moonlight night, very still and, for the season, warm. The drive was one which Mary, sitting in the corner of the wagonette, never forgot. She sat looking back upon the road, waiting to hear the beat of the brougham horse's feet behind them.

Mrs. McFarlane made hardly a pretense of anxiety over Mrs. Hyllis' health, when the cause of that lady's absence was politely explained by Flora Vane. She showed doubt so plainly, that Mary, who had been struggling hard to suppress her own, gave up any further effort to believe in her fiancé, and occupied herself in vain and passionate wishing that the delinquents would arrive.

The dinner was a large one—twenty-four there should have been. Though sparsely populated, the neighborhood had contributed three house parties besides their own. Mary sat between two unknown men, who did little to interrupt the course of her suffering.

She kept her eyes on the doorway.

During the oysters, she thought she heard wheels on the gravel outside the window; through soup, she believed that they would presently enter; by the time shad was before her she was less confident; at the *entrée* she still hoped; by the time lamb was handed she merely longed for their coming; by *pâté* all hope had died, and with the game, when her hostess firmly ordered the two vacant places removed, Mary felt that the worst had happened.

No wonder that he had been able to offer her a free day, when he knew the evening that was before him! How simple she had been to believe in him! Ferrars was right. She glanced at him across the table, and found him regarding her with a solicitude she could hardly forgive. Was it possible that she was looking heartbroken? She spurred herself to a faint conversational effort with the man next her, and then, realizing how little she cared what any one thought of her, she again relapsed.

Fortunately, the country district had not heard all the gossip of town, and were, for the most part, unaware that Miss Tremont's presence in Warden's house had any significance. She was allowed to overhear, therefore, a few sentences between Flora and Mrs. McFarlane when the ladies were alone in the drawing room after dinner. Flora had plainly been trying to plead the cause of the truants.

"Mr. Warden will so much regret this, I know," she was saying. "He spoke so many times of your perfection as a hostess, and of the necessity of punctuality at your house."

Mrs. McFarlane laughed. "Oh, certainly, I can believe that," she said; "the more punctually all of you got off the better."

The stab was a cruel one. For an instant Mary felt a wave of self-pity sweep over her. How could he treat her so in public? The next instant she resolved that he should never have the chance again.

As soon as the men came in, she was glad to see Ferrars making his way toward her. He, at least, would not make any demand for small talk.

He flung himself into a chair, and for a few minutes remained as silent as she. Then, rousing himself, he said:

"You'd better try to talk. It's being remarked on—your unhappiness, I mean."

"Remarked on? By whom?"

"What can you expect? One of the men has heard the story that you are engaged to Warden. You can imagine the witticisms that are going about. The fellow who sat next you forgives you, he says, for not paying any attention to him. 'Engaged to *him*, poor little thing!' were his final words."

"I'm not engaged to him," said Mary, passionately; "at least, I shan't be after I have been five minutes alone with him."

"Thank God!" said Ferrars. "Then, Mary—"

But she was not listening to him. She went on rapidly:

"Of course I know no one will ever believe he asked me. They will all think—"

"Mary," said Ferrars—he turned to her with more determination than she had ever seen him show before—"come away with me to-night. I don't leave the house until twelve o'clock. Every one will be asleep. Come with me. We shall sail on Tuesday, and, please Heaven, we shall never see any of these people again."

There was no denying that the prospect allured Mary—to be free from all questionings and doubt, to be removed from all those who had looked on and wondered, and, above all things, to inflict suffering on Warden. For, in her heart, she knew that he would suffer, at least a little, and the idea intoxicated her. She imagined the next morning. The woman he had wanted for his wife gone, and with a boy, into whose company he had so confidently thrown her!

If she stayed quietly at home and broke her engagement before it was even announced, the world would believe it had never existed, but the very fact of her elopement would convince all true gossip-lovers that she was breaking some one's heart. Warden would cut a sorry figure before his

world. The man who, with all his advantages, could not hold his fiancée's affection.

"I'll go," she said, and was alarmed at the intensity of joy she saw in Ferrars' eyes.

A silence fell on them. He plainly was maturing his plans. "He'll be there to see me off, I suppose," he said, "but I'll have the machine stopped beyond the turn in the avenue and wait for you there. Start as soon as you can after you hear the machine leave the door." She was wishing she could be there in the morning, when Wirdden heard of her flight.

Flora was enjoying herself, and in no hurry to go, but her pity for her cousin led her to rise as soon as she decently could, avowing her solicitude for the invalid at home.

"I would not let that thought hurry me away, Mrs. Vane," said the hostess; but Flora was firm and took her departure.

Wirdden was waiting for them in the hall, without a trace of guilt or even of self-consciousness.

"Nothing serious," he said; "just overfatigue. You seem to have taken her the deuce of a ride, Ned. She is not very strong, and is too fond of exercising. She was quite unfit to go out, and I thought it was better for me to stay with her."

"She came down to dinner?"

"She hardly ate anything."

Mary turned and looked at Ferrars significantly. She saw that *tête-à-tête* dinner in her mind's eye, and her resolution was strengthened. Coming back in the wagonette, she had weakened. She had been thinking of her parents, wishing that they were near enough for her to go to them, saying to herself that perhaps she would go no further than the station with Ferrars.

Wirdden addressed Ferrars: "The machine will be here at twelve o'clock. That gives you more than enough time, though the road is not very good. It is such a beautiful night that I have half a mind to take you over myself."

Mary heard him with a sensation between horror and relief. She looked at

Ferrars, and he at her. Then Ferrars said, quickly:

"You won't think me rude, I hope, if I say that I am nervous about automobiles. Over these roads, at this time of night, wouldn't a professional chauffeur be safer?"

Wirdden smiled, but his eyes rested first on one and then on the other of them for an instant. "Perhaps you are right," he said. "I'll see you before you go, in any case."

On this the party dispersed. Mary went to her room, packed a small bag, changed her dress to a plain traveling costume, and then, turning out the lights, knelt in her window, waiting.

Before long she heard the distant pant of the machine, coming up from the garage; then its two great eyes shone along the drive, and it stopped at the door.

Almost at once Ferrars, in hat and coat, came out; a servant put in his valise. Wirdden, bareheaded, still in evening dress, stood by, bidding his guest good-by.

"I am sorry you have to go," he said.

"I hope I shall be missed to-morrow," said Ferrars, gayly.

The machine swept away. Wirdden watched it until it was out of sight, standing with his hands in his pockets. She saw him look up at the heavens, reflectively surveying the weather, and noted his habitual calmness. If he only knew! Then he turned, and she heard him give orders to put out all the lights. This was fortunate. If he had taken a fancy to sit up, reading, she would have had some trouble in stealing past the library door.

Immediately the sound of bolts and shutters was heard, and then all was still.

Mary waited five minutes by her watch, and then stole downstairs without a sound. The house was in total darkness. She undid a side door, and, shutting it behind her, stepped out on the piazza. It looked south, and the moon, not yet full, flooded the stretch of lawn before her, but was too high in the heavens to shine in under the

roof of the piazza, which was in shadow—shadow so deep as to hide completely a figure which had risen from one of the long chairs, and now said quietly:

"Where are you going, Mary?"

If her first feeling was one of terror at seeing him, she almost at once realized that fate had been unexpectedly kind in giving her the opportunity to deal the great blow herself. She had fancied Flora's breaking it to him in the morning. She could now have the satisfaction of doing it herself.

She answered with a steady voice: "I am going away with Mr. Ferrars."

"I had supposed he had gone already."

"He is waiting for me at the turn in the avenue."

"And you intend to marry him?"

"Yes."

"And to go to Paris with him?"

"If I keep him waiting, I am afraid we shall miss that train."

"That would be awkward, but you have plenty of time. Had you already made this plan when we were driving together this morning?"

"No."

"When did you make it? When you found you could not say good-by to him?"

"Yes—no, I decided to go when I found you had asked me down here to insult me before your friends; to show me how little you cared what was said about me."

"What do you mean?"

"Oh, my eyes were opened to-night at dinner! They all knew, they all felt sorry for me, they all pitied me. Even Cousin Flora tells me I must not complain; it is so natural for you to prefer another woman. But at least in public you might— However, it is all one to me now whether you prefer her or not."

"I see. It is not my having a preference, but my showing it, that you object to."

"I have no taste for the part of a neglected wife. I know it was not in the bargain that you should even like me, but I thought you had enough re-

spect for appearances to treat me with outward civility, and since you do not—"

"Mary, do you really imagine I am going to let you go off with that hysterical boy?"

The hateful adjective impaled Mary's attention, but she said:

"I don't know how you could stop me, Mr. Wirdden."

"Don't you? I can think of a dozen ways To wring his neck, for one. I've a mind to do it, anyhow. Confounded young bounder, coming down here to stay with me, and trying to run off with my girl in my own machine!"

"Your house and your automobile, perhaps, Mr. Wirdden; not your girl."

"Are you quite sure of that, Mary?"

Her reply was obvious. "If you will move out of my way, I will give you the best proof possible that I am sure."

"You shall not go, Mary."

"You have no right to keep me."

"Perhaps not, but I have the power."

He moved toward her almost threateningly, so that she retreated until her back was against the wall. He stood before her with his hands resting against the wall on each side of her; thus making his arms barriers to her escape, and bringing his face close to hers.

"Upon my word," he said, speaking quietly, but with a quietness that suddenly made her distrust all his previous calmness—"upon my word, you have courage to come to me and tell me coolly that you propose running away from me. What sort of a lover do you take me for?"

"A lover!" echoed Mary, scornfully.

"Yes, a lover; *your* lover, you stupid girl! I've seemed calm, I suppose. Well, I'm not. I've about reached the limit of my self-control."

"Your self-control?" gasped Mary.

"Do you think it is an easy rôle that I've been playing—the confidant of your love affairs with that damned young cad who, thank God, is going to pay the price of it all?"

"By marrying me, you mean?"

"By losing you. He is waiting for you now. He is wondering why you

don't come. He is getting extremely anxious."

At this Mary made the serious strategic mistake—if it were a mistake—of attempting to duck below his arms and escape, giving him, of course, the excuse to imprison her quite securely in his embrace.

"I love you, Mary," he said, "better than that boy knows anything about."

"Oh, no," said Mary, regaining only as much liberty as made speech possible; "you can't, you don't. I can't believe it."

"And why, then, have I asked you to marry me? For the sake of the name Tremont? My darling, Jones would have pleased me quite as well if it had been your name." He kissed her, and if further doubt remained in her mind she did not betray it by the appealing question:

"Oh, but why did not you tell me before?"

"Because I was so confoundedly afraid of you. You had refused me with scorn, Mary. And then afterward, when the situation had changed a little, I had not the courage either to refuse your cold-blooded proposal entirely, or to go into it letting you know how hopelessly you had me at a disadvantage. I thought my best chance was in meeting you on equal terms, and letting you want me to love you before you knew—but what is the use of my going over my plans now that they have so obviously failed?"

What is so soft, thought Mary, as the satin lapel of an evening coat? She made no effort to lift her cheek from it.

"They have not entirely failed, Lewis," she said.

"What, not with Ferrars waiting for you at the corner of the avenue?"

"Oh, Lewis, I have behaved so badly to him!"

"Don't you mean to me?"

"I ought to go and explain to him, but I can't, I can't!"

"Not while there is breath in my body."

"And he may wait there all night!"

"Cheer up, dear; perhaps the watchman will run him in."

"I am so ashamed of myself, and you ought to be ashamed of me, too, Lewis. I thought of nothing but my own feelings and yours——"

"Mine?"

"Of wounding yours, I mean, at his expense, and, oh, Lewis——"

Wirdden's back was toward the steps, and, for obvious reasons, Mary did not see beyond him, so neither of them witnessed the approach of Ferrars. They stood, however, so completely in shadow that he, on the other hand, did not see them.

He came to the foot of the steps and whispered: "Are you here, Mary?"

With great presence of mind, Wirdden drew a tall wicker chair in front of the girl, and himself stepped out into the moonlight.

"Is that you, Ferrars?" he said. "Machine not broken down, I hope?"

Ferrars was, not unnaturally, somewhat taken aback, but he managed to say that the machine was all right.

"Left something behind you, perhaps? Nothing of importance, I hope?"

"Well, it is rather important," returned Ferrars, with hesitation.

"Let me send it after you by express, then. You have not more than time to catch your train."

Ferrars stood in really pitiable uncertainty. He could not be sure whether Wirdden had caught Mary in the very act of escape, and had succeeded in turning her back, or whether she, knowing that her host and late fiancé was still about, had not dared venture out of her room. In one case, he might as well be off, shaking the dust of the place from his feet. In the other, it behooved him to await his true love.

"I don't know, after all, that I want to catch that train," he said, at length.

Wirdden answered with some firmness: "Mr. Ferrars, I don't wish to seem inhospitable, but I think you *do* wish to catch that train. It seems to me it would be a great pity for you to let it go without you. I don't think you will find what you are looking for,

and I advise you, if you have anything worth doing in New York, to catch this train and go and do it."

"You mean you will not allow me to enter the house?"

"No, I mean, if you insist on candor, that I don't care sixpence what you do."

"You mean that nothing I can do will affect your plans?"

"Exactly."

There was a short silence, and then Ferrars turned away and disappeared down the avenue. A few moments later the automobile might have been heard proceeding on its way.

The announcement, the following week, of the engagement of Miss Mary Tremont, only daughter of Mr. Ferdinand Tremont, to Mr. Lewis Wirden, the well-known merchant, president of the Memorial Bank, created almost as much excitement as if it had never been prophesied. There were some people, notably those who had been at the McFarlanes' dinner, who pitied the poor girl very much for sacrificing herself to a man who cared nothing about her. There were some, also, who wondered how so demure a little person had contrived to land so great a prize. But for the most part their friends congratulated them very sincerely, and Mary was not ill pleased to find that she was the more warmly congratulated of the two.

Even her own parents, who had returned from California and were spending a few days with the Vanes, before moving to the Manor, began to tell her that she was a singularly lucky girl.

As they sat about in Flora's drawing room, one evening after dinner, Wirden with them, Flora was minded to observe:

"Really, Cousin Sarah, don't you think I did well for her? All my friends will be sending me daughters to chaperon for the winter."

Mrs. Tremont found this line of thought a little vulgar—worthy, at least, of a mild rebuke.

"I am sure that you did everything that was kind, my dear Flora," she said, "but we cannot let you assume the responsibility of the engagement. Mr. Wirden—Lewis, I mean—had spoken to her father before we went."

"He had!" cried Flora, springing up. "Oh, you deceitful girl, and you, too, Lewis Wirden, letting me worry myself to death over your apparent misunderstandings; and you, miss, swearing to me that he did not make love to you and cared nothing for you! And your goings on with that yellow-eyed boy, who went to Paris to drown his sorrow, and we all know what happens to unhappy young men in Paris——"

"He did not go to Paris," said Wirden, gently. "I see by the papers that he has just been appointed to a very good position on some public buildings that are going up in my native town."

"Oh, I'm so glad!" said Mary. "A really good position?"

"A high salary, I understand."

"I wonder how he ever came to be appointed," said the girl.

"Yes, I wonder," answered Wirden; and the very impersonality of tone answered her question.



## IN SHADOW

**H**EEDS yonder star thy song,  
O warbler of the night?

"I know not, for the way is long

That leads unto the light.

But as the music of the spheres

A twinkling silence here appears,

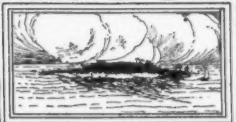
Perchance my warbling from afar

Appears a star."

JOHN B. TABB.



# MR. BOB



BY LLOYD OSBOURNE



Far away in the western Pacific, in that labyrinth of coral reefs and low palm-rimmed isles floating between the blue of heaven and the deeper blue of sea, known to the pajama-clad, earringed traders as "the Group," and to the outer world as Micronesia—here, one burning morning, there arrived a visitor from "home," who descended, not from some tubby bark or slant-masted schooner, but godlike from the glorious stars themselves—Christmas Day!

The Reverend Walter Kirke looked out moodily from beneath the eaves of his basket-work house, and his heart sank as he gazed across the sweltering strip of water, twenty miles wide, that divided the island of Apiang from its neighbor, Tarawa. His brother in the Lord across the strait, the perpetually unfortunate Titcombe—the Reverend J. B. Tracy Titcombe, M. A.—had sent in a proa with a message of such urgency and need that delay, let alone refusal, was utterly out of the question.

"The king has broken all his promises," wrote Titcombe, in a hand illegible from distress and agitation. "He threatens to burn the new church, flog the members, and spear, personally, the leading lights of our infant congregation. Yesterday, on my remonstrating with him, he gave me twenty-four hours to leave the island, calling me at the same time a sting-ray, a detached jelly-fish, a white squid—together with some other local expressions of a highly wounding and contemptuous nature. The tiny fold is terrorized, and Thomas Najibika, my deacon and right-hand

man, is in hourly apprehension of a massacre. My wife and little Kenneth are down with fever, and this, together with my halting knowledge of the native language, has put me at such a disadvantage that I have no alternative but to appeal to you. For Heaven's sake, please come instantly, and exert yourself on my behalf, or else we may lose Tarawa for good, and put back the good work by a dozen years."

"We'll have to go, dear," said Kirke to his pretty wife.

"Yes, we'll have to go," she assented, sadly.

She could not help feeling cross with the Titcombes for always muddling things—a little unjustly, perhaps—for her own missionary path had ever been so easy and untroubled. Mrs. Kirke was a woman of marked beauty, whose sweet imperiousness, sympathy, humor and tact made her the adored of the islanders. She not only spoke native well, but with a zest and sparkle, a silver ripple of irony, ridicule and good-fellowship, that carried everything before it. No kings ever bothered Mrs. Kirke. Even the redoubtable Tembinok, with forty boats full of armed savages, had been stemmed in his Napoleonic career and turned back by her from his projected invasion of Apiang—presenting the missionary's wife on his departure with a gold-inlaid Winchester that was the apple of his eye.

"I shall make Karaitch smart for this," she said, vindictively. "I shan't let him off with less than twenty tons of coprah for my girls' school, and he'll have to apologize, too, and swear on a shark's head to behave for a year!"

"We can't all have such intrepid little wives," said Kirke, putting his arm

fondly about her. Experience had shown him that in native questions she was always as good as her word, and it was with a kind of proud humility he conceded her the place he was so much less able himself to fill. He had not the faintest apprehensions about the Tarawa matter. Ada would bring the king to heel in fifteen minutes—and in twenty there would be the dawn of a new peace, with stately apologies, gifts of turtle and bonito hooks, endless and troublesomely idiomatic compliments—and, incidentally, a little friction with the Titcombes, who would certainly resent being saved so easily.

No, Kirke wasn't afraid of Karaitch. Ada would settle Karaitch out of hand. What he dreaded was that twenty miles of water under the noonday sun, and the problem of Daisy—Daisy, their little girl of eight—who was playing so contentedly on the floor with the presents Santa Claus had just brought her.

"Oh, Walter, I can't let her go again!" cried Mrs. Kirke. "Last time she nearly died in the boat, and you know she wasn't really herself for weeks and weeks afterward."

Daisy heard her name being spoken, and looked up. Her sleek little head and round brown eyes gave her the look of a baby seal. Such a happy baby seal that morning, with a two-dollar magic lantern, twelve Biblical slides, a dolly that could squeak in the most lifelike manner, and a darling little chair!

"But leave her?" questioned Kirke, with a hopeless gesture of his hand. "And that with the island full of mutineers, and Heaven only knows to-day what devilry and carousing?"

Mrs. Kirke thought a while.

"Twenty miles over there—three hours," she said at last. "An hour to straighten out the king—four hours. Three back makes seven. That means being home by sundown. We can trust Nantok all right to take good care of her, and then I'll get Peter to send down an armed guard!"

Kirke acquiesced in silence. He was a tall, thin man, not overclever, whose fervent Christianity was strangely at variance with a constitutional inclina-

tion to see the darker side of things. He distrusted Nantok, distrusted the king's guard, felt a profound apprehension of that jeering, boisterous mob of sailors who pigged together in Rick's old boat shed, and were numerous enough to defy every law of the island. It was terrible to him to leave his little girl in such company. Yet he recalled his last trip across the strait, when she had fainted with the heat—fainted again and again—as they had attempted, with such distress and agony, to screen her from a glare as pitiless as a furnace. He remembered dipping her, naked, all but lifeless, into the milk-warm water, till up from the transparent depths the swift, bluish glimmer of a shark warned him to snatch her in; remembered the hopelessness of it, the terror, the despair, he himself bending to an oar, and offering every inducement his mind could think of to incite his crew to pull their hearts out. No, all that was a nightmare to look back on—never, never to be repeated.

Daisy was called over, and the situation explained to her. Like all only children, living constantly in the society of her parents, and sharing their talk and plans, she was precociously old for her age, and more serious and thoughtful than a little tot ought to be. Though her lower lip trembled and her eyes flooded with tears, she put on a brave face to it, and protested her willingness to remain with Nantok, and be a good little girl.

"And mamma and papa will be back at dusk—and if they are detained, you mustn't be the least bit worried about them—and you'll let Nantok put you to bed at eight—and if you wake up and feel frightened you are to remember the army outside, guarding you in your sleep like a little princess!"

"And Dod, too," added Daisy, piously, though inwardly pleased to have the army as well.

"Oh, my lamb!" cried Mrs. Kirke, clasping her to her breast. "It breaks mamma's heart to leave her little girl on Christmas Day!" Altogether, it was a damp moment in the Kirke family, and even the missionary's eyes were

suspiciously moist as he knelt beside his wife, and talked hurriedly about the magic lantern and the dolly, and what a jolly evening they'd all have when they got back from Tarawa.

Preparations were soon made. The whaleboat was got ready, and manned by a stout crew of such recent Christians that the demons of the strait had first to be appeased by two cans of salmon and six biscuit, paid secretly in advance to Nebenua, the devil priest. Then, when all was ready, even to the breaker of brackish water, a forty-pound tin of pilot bread, two hundred fresh nuts, medicine chest, compass and five pounds of niggerhead tobacco by way of petty cash, the whole expedition was tantalized and held back by the nonarrival of the guard, who were frenziedly searching for their boots. Why the army was so ruthlessly condemned to wear boots is a question that was often asked and never properly answered. Nobody else wore boots—not even the king—but the military caste is proverbially dressy, and it is enough to say that the armed forces of Apiang set immense store by their boots!

At last they arrived, boots and all, a straggling, hobbling party of seven, with cartridge belts and rifles. Little Daisy was formally put in their charge; solemn pledges were given and accepted; a keg of beef, to be subsequently presented, was hedged about with innumerable restrictions. That keg—like liberty—was to be at the price of eternal vigilance. And then, when everything had been said and explained and threatened, the whaleboat hoisted her anchor—a coral stone—and set a straight course for Tarawa.

It was a long day—a very long day—quite the longest day in Daisy's tiny life. She successively exhausted the magic lantern, the dolly and the chair. She went out and prattled with the army, where they sprawled under the lee of the kitchen, smoking endless pandanus cigarettes. She helped Nantok prepare lunch—a bowl of chocolate made with condensed milk, and hot buttered toast. After lunch she had a nap

with Nantok on the mats, and after that again an exciting talk about the great massacre on Tapatuea, where all Nantok's people had been killed during that Kanaka Saint Bartholomew's. Then out to the army again, and checkers, which the army played amazingly well—beating her so often that even this pastime palled. Then—

Oh, what a sigh!

The sleek little seal was aweary, aweary. The house was so empty, so still, and there was such a void in that aching baby heart. She went into papa's room, and cried on his bed. He would be drowned in the strait—savage old Karaitch would shoot him with a gun—he would be blown out to sea, like Mr. Pettibone, the beach-comber. The hot tears scalded her cheeks. She had always liked Mr. Pettibone. Papa called him a proff—proff—proff something, but he had always been so jolly, and his red face and funny little blue eyes rose before her out of the mist.

She cried over the lost Pettibone, over Tansy, the cat, that had died from eating a lizard, over Nosey, her pet chicken that Nantok had killed by mistake one night for supper; cried over papa and mamma, far away in the whaler—totaled up all the little sadnesses of her little life, meting out tears to every one. And then, feeling greatly refreshed, she went out on the front porch, and wondered what she should do next.

Down the shore, about a mile away, there were others who found time less heavy on their hands. At the "Land We Live In," a one-roomed saloon which catered for a permanent white population of thirteen, and a transient one that varied from a cutter to a full-rigged ship—at the "Land We Live In" Christmas was being celebrated in a rousing fashion. To begin with, there were the mutineers of the *Lord Dundonald*, twenty-two strong, with plenty of money still to spend. Their revolt against authority had not been without some redeeming features, and an unbiased critic would have found it hard to blame them. After twenty-seven days and nights at the pumps of a

four-masted sieve, the Lords had struck in a body, and forced the captain to abandon the ship and set out in three boats for Apiang. Here they double-dyed their crime by compelling the wrathful master to pay them their wages to date, from two hundred and thirty-nine pounds he had taken with him from a vessel he had fondly hoped to pump to China. Captain Latimer, with the three mates, the carpenter and one of the hands, had sailed away south in the longboat, vowing yardarms and a man-of-war, and when last seen was sinking over the horizon in the direction of the Fiji Islands.

Well, here they all were in the "Land We Live In," together with Tom Holderson, Peter Extrum, Eddy Newnes and Long Joe Kelly—all of Apiang; Papa Benson, of Tarawa; Jones and Peabody, of Big Muggin, and crazy old Jimmy Mathison, of nowhere in particular—unless it were the nearest gin bottle; and it was a rip-roaring Christmas, and no mistake, with bottled beer flowing like water; and songs and choruses and clog dances and horn-pipes; and Papa Benson—in earrings and pink pajamas—a-blowing enough wind through his concertina to have sailed a ship. And there were girls, too, seven or eight of them, in bright trade-cotton Mother Hubbards—a bevy of black-eyed little heathen savages—who bore a hand with the trays, and added their saucy laughter to the general gayety—helping out Larry the bar-keeper as he drew unending corks, or stopped to wipe the sweat off his forehead, saying: "Gentlemen, the drinks is on Billy"—or Tommy or Long Joe, or whoever it was that was shouting.

Suddenly at the door, which had been kept shut to prevent the natives from assembling and peering in—suddenly at the door there was heard a faint, faint knock. The concertina stopped. Fritz the Dutchman said: "Hoosh," and raised his pipe for silence. The knock was repeated. Quiet descended on the "Land We Live In." Larry looked up from his bottles, and in a rough and belligerent voice called out: "Come in!"

The invitation was hesitatingly obeyed, and there stood Daisy Kirke on the threshold, a sweet, faltering figure, with her guard, boots and all, lined up in the roadway. Hardly a soul in the room knew there was a little white girl on the island; and the sight of Daisy, with the red ribbon in her hair, her dimity frock, her long stockings and pinafore, was as startling as it was unexpected.

"Howdy-do, everybody!" said she.

There was an embarrassed silence.

"I know you better than you do me," went on Daisy, confidentially, proving it with her forefinger. "That's Tommy, the cabin boy—and yonder's Mr. Mathison, the beach-comber—and you"—indicating a giant of a man with an aquiline nose and a square-cut beard—"you are Mr. Bob Fletcher, the ring-leader!"

A giggle of subdued merriment ran round the room. An instinctive respect kept it within bounds, or perhaps it was Bob Fletcher's fierce and warning look that cowed any incipient rowdiness. The brawny mutineer set her on his knee, and in a voice harshened by thirty years' service before the mast asked her, deferentially, if she fancied a glass of syrup?

"No, thank you," said Daisy, politely; and then, addressing everybody in general: "Papa and mamma's gone to Tarawa."

"Now, if that ain't too bad!" put in Bob, sympathetically.

"And so it just occurred to me," went on Daisy, "to do something nice to surprise them when they came back."

A profound silence greeted this remark. The devil's love of holy water is a craving compared to the amount of love lost between a South Sea missionary and the rough white element that mocks his labors at every turn. It was the custom of the Lord Dundonalds, moreover, to hoot the Reverend Walter Kirke whenever they met him. It was a recollection of this that made the present situation so piquant and humorous.

"Besides, it seems too bad," continued Daisy, "that the natives should

have such a fuss made over them while all you white gentlemen are left out in the cold. It must look queer to Dod, and I don't believe He likes it."

"Everything for the niggers, that's right," muttered Tom Extrum, bitterly, "and not even a six-months-old newspaper for the likes of us!"

"You don't look so werry wicked," said Daisy, taking in the room with a comprehensive glance, and putting an arm around Mr. Bob's neck, as though confident of having at least one friend among the company. "I wonder if you wouldn't all like to come along to my house, and play with my magic lantern, and—and—organize a Band of Hope?"

She was abashed by the roar of laughter that followed the proposal. Papa Benson flung himself on the floor and rolled over and over. Long Joe uttered whoops of delight. Even Mr. Bob shook with speechless mirth till the veins on his forehead stood out like strings. Never in all its history was there such a hullabulloo in the "Land We Live in." As the rumpus died down, something very like remorse overwhelmed the roisterers as they saw Daisy's flushing, quivering little face, hot with mortification.

It was Mr. Bob who sprang to the rescue before the brimming tears could fall.

"I'm on!" he shouted, rising to his feet with unexpected enthusiasm. "Now, then, boys, who says 'ay, ay,' for the Band of 'Ope?"

A good part of the crowd would have preferred to stay by their spree; but so contagious is example, and so sheeplike the sailor nature, that the whole room fell in with Bob, and answered his call like one man.

He swung Daisy up on his shoulder, where from that dizzy perch she looked back shyly at the noisy pack behind her. Secure in the conquest of the ring-leader, whom intuitively she felt stronger than the rest, and kinder and more resolute, with a heart beneath his rough exterior as simple and childlike as her own, she managed to keep up her courage in spite of the loud, frightening

laughter and the tipsy boisterousness and horseplay that marked the inception of the Band of Hope. Her satisfaction was suddenly checked, however, by the sight of the Kanaka girls joining the procession, and making as though to follow.

"No, they mustn't come," she cried out, jealously. "Please, Mr. Mathison, tell them they mustn't come! This is to be for men only."

"Turn them back," thundered Bob. "Don't yer 'ear the little lady's orders. Scamper, ye jades!"

Papa Benson struck up a quickstep on the concertina, and, marching beside Bob Fletcher, helped to lead the van. The mutineers, beach-combers and traders fell in two by two. The rear was brought up by the guard, loutish, hobbling and out of step, bearing their rusty Springfields at all angles. In this fashion they made the missionary's house, swarmed into the neat, bare inclosure of coral sand, and invaded the silent rooms.

A terrible irresolution was stealing over Daisy. Twelve slides, representing the wanderings of Saint Paul, began to seem too trifling a means of holding the attention of this enormous and expectant crowd. Besides, it came over her with a shock that she was a little hazy about Saint Paul; and then there were disturbing questions of sheets and darkened windows and how to make it work. It was with dismay, verging on despair, that she saw the serried ranks of her recruits crowding the room to bursting, and all regarding her with humorous anticipation. But good Mr. Bob, holding her in his lap, and stroking her hair with an enormous red hand, showed a most comforting disposition to himself take the breach. At any rate, he roared for silence; told Mr. Mathison he'd cut his liver out if he didn't belay with them there re-marks; and assumed a tone of authority that calmed the tumult of Daisy's misgivings.

"Friends," he said, "and mates, and respected genelman hall, we are here, two and three gathered together-like, for the purpose of horganizing a Band of 'Ope!"

"Local Number One," interrupted Billy Dutton, the donkey man, who had had some trades' union experience.

"Band of 'Ope, Local Number One," continued Mr. Bob, receiving the suggestion in an accommodating spirit. "And it is with great pleasure I propose the name of hour first president, Miss Daisy Kirke, of Apiang!"

Then, my stars, wasn't there a cheer! Daisy hung her head, nestled closer to Mr. Bob, and felt all the joy of good works promptly bearing fruit.

"I don't see no reason," went on Mr. Bob, "why a false modesty that 'as been my hunfailing 'andicap through life should prevent me from nominating myself as your hesteemed vice-president. I do not wish to seem a-soaring too 'igh, or reaching out for honors that belong to habler 'eads nor mine—but I'll take the sense of the meeting in a kindly spirit, and will abide peaceable by a show of 'ands!"

When the applause had subsided, Billy Dutton sprang up, and wanted to know what about a "recording seckitary."

"I don't see no 'arm in the honorable genelman hassuming the job hisself," said Mr. Bob, "if he thinks he's sufficient of a speller, and won't run the band into 'orrible extravagances for 'igh-priced wines and luxuries. The assessments of this band is going to be low, and the diet plain. Who says Brother Dutton ain't the man for the place? Is it you, Mr. Riley. I see raising your fist agin' him? Oh, only to ax a question. Well, one thing at a time, Brother Riley. Does the meeting hindorse Mr. Willum Dutton for recording seckitary?"

The meeting did—vociferously and with cheers. Daisy ran and got her slate for the recording seckitary, who thereupon—after first inscribing the names of the office bearers in a shaky print—began to draw a wonderful picture of a pirate ship.

"Afore listening to the plans of our valued president," said Mr. Bob, "I propose myself to hoffer up a few general remarks on 'Ope! Me and 'Ope is old friends, genelman. We set sail to-

gether from the port of London, 'Ope and I, when I was a bright-faced boy that 'igh! We've bunked in together, fair weather and foul, coming on this thirty year. We have set in our time, me and 'Ope, on the bottom of a cap-sized schooner, ore-laden out of Mazatland, with our tongues 'anging out like the tails of some vallyble, new kind of a black dorg. 'Ope and I took the Chainy coast once on a chicken coop. 'Ope and I, when we had the dollars, blew them in right royal. 'Ope and I, when we 'adn't none, tightened our belts and cheered each other hup. Looking back over all them years, I want to stand hup and testify right 'ere to the best friend of the sailorman, bar none, and p'raps the honly one he ever 'ad—and that's 'Ope, God bless her!"

Amid the ensuing uproar, which jarred the walls of that prim missionary residence like an explosion of dynamite, spilling plates off dressers and cock-billing texts, and arresting the astonished clock at four-forty-six—little Daisy was trying to nerve herself to address the assembled company. The unforeseen docility of the band had put new ideas in that sleek, baby-seal head. Odds and ends of tracts and story books recurred to her. Infantile ambitions awoke and clamored. But it was daunting, just the same, to confront those rows of eyes, and those great big unshaved, shaggy-looking faces, all keenly waiting for her to speak.

"Now, then, little lady," said the vice-president, "'ere's your Band of 'Ope, a-panting to set its 'and to the plow!"

Daisy cleared her throat. Pride and timidity struggled with each other in that eager little countenance. Had it not been for an encouraging squeeze from Mr. Bob, who knows but what she might have burst into tears, and disgraced herself before the whole band? But the squeeze, coming exactly at the right time, averted so mortifying a catastrophe.

"My dear friends," began Daisy, catching with unconscious mimicry some of the rounded tones of her father's voice, "my dear, kind friends!"

"Well, go on!" cried Mr. Bob.



"That's a swell start! That's the way to wake them up!"

"Hear! Hear!"—this from a dozen places.

"I have called you togevvver," went on Daisy, bravely, "so we might enjoy the travels of Saint Paul, which belongs to the magic lantern Santa Claus brought me this morning for Christmas because I'm such a good little girl. Saint Paul was a kind of a sailor, too, and got shipwrecked, like Mr. Bob, in an awful storm. I used to know all about Saint Paul, but somehow I've got mixed up about him since. Perhaps one of our members will oblige, so we'll know what the slides are about when we get wound to them."

There was a profound silence. No one volunteered. Billy Dutton, looking up from the pirate ship, to which he was adding some finishing touches, said he was afeared the president would find them a sad ignorant lot of ignor-potamusses.

"Then we'll just have to get along without Saint Paul," said Daisy, regretfully. "Perhaps it is as well, too, for Bands of Hope isn't only for amoosement—but to do good, and help uvvers, and carry the glad tidings right and left into the darkest corners of the earth."

"Gee-whilikins!" exclaimed Sammy Nesbit. "Where's this we're fetching up to, mates?"

"Silence! Horder! Shut your face! Dry up, there, Sammy!" roared the Band of Hope.

"I was finking," went on the president, confidentially, and undisturbed, "why a nice little surprise for papa wouldn't be as good an idea as any. It's an awful long way to Tarawa and back, and papa's never been werry strong since the fever he got in New Guinea, before he married mamma with Mr. Chalmers."

"Wot sort of a surprise hexactly?" asked the vice-president, with an expression of some doubt.

"Putting up mottoes wound the walls," returned Daisy, "and green branches and palm leaves and texes and 'Merry Christmas,' like grandpapa's,

in Virginia, when I was a little tiny winy girl. And papa will be so pleased and happy and surprised that I know he'll just love it, and won't never feel tired at all!"

The Band of Hope, who seemed given to singular and inextinguishable fits of laughter, promptly went off into another paroxysm; and laughter with the Band of Hope was no drawing-room performance, no polite titter behind an upraised hand. When the Band of Hope laughed it rolled on the floor, beat its clinched fists against neighboring backs, screamed, huzza-ed, cat-called, kicked pajama legs in the air, and shook the pictures off the walls. Mr. Bob seemed to be the only one who knew how to behave, but even Mr. Bob grew crimson in the face, and choked, and opened his mouth till you could see 'way down his froat.

"Genelmen," he said, when at last he had somewhat recovered. "You've listened to our horders, and I'll honly remind you that them that ain't with us is agin' us, as Saint Paul says. Backsliders and goats may return to the bar, but me and the fleecy sheep is a-going to see this thing through, and do our dooty under the regulations by board of trade happointed. Goats, as I said afore, will kindly rise and step out!"

"We ain't no blooming quitters," spoke up Billy Dutton. "Goats nothing, you wall-eyed old ram! You want to cinch all the texes for yesself, and make a running with our lovely president. But we are onto you, Bob Fletcher, and I voice the sentiments of the whole band when I says with Saint John in the Forty-first Epistle to the Proosians: 'Wot you put your fist to, that do it with all yer might!'"

"Ay, ay!" chorused the band, with boisterous approval.

"Then hup and work, you devils!" exclaimed the vice-president. "Pull out that table, Mack—and you, there, bear a 'and to 'elp 'im, 'Enery. Set hup the little chair, Williams! Easy with Saint Paul, you, Tommy—or you'll crack him sure—and lay the whole caboodlum on the shelf, out of 'arm's way! Lively, lads, lively!"

Bob lifted Daisy in his arms, and, carrying her to the table, installed her comfortably in the little chair.

"Captain's bridge," he said; "and if anything ain't right or just haccording to your idears, you sing out to the lower deck, loud and 'earty—only mind you don't get hexcited and spill orf!"

Daisy's eyes danced, and her timidity all vanished as she saw the jovial and obedient band grouping together, and hotly discussing the proposed decorations. Distances were measured with tarry thumbs. A party of six was told off to climb the cocoa palms across the road; while another, shouting and hallooing like schoolboys, was dispatched to Holderson's station to get sennit. There was a noisy wrangle over spelling. "I never seed it like that," said one, squinting over Billy's slate; "and I don't believe nobody else ever did, neither." "For the love of Mike," roared another, "let's stick to them words we're all agreed on, and keep off of that thorological grass!" "Man and boy, I've been to sea this thirty years," exclaimed Mr. Bob, with crushing vehemence, "and there warn't no *t* in Christmas then—and there ain't now! C-r-i-s-s-m-a-s, you son of a sea-cook, and I know hevry letter of it like the palm of me 'and!"

In a corner, dispassionately aloof from all the bustle and argument, Papa Benson, that venerable dandy of the pink pajamas, pumped up the concertina, and drew melodiously on his ancient repertoire. To the inspiring strains of "In Her Hair She Wore a White Camelia," "Oh, Buffalo Gals, Won't You Come Out To-night?" and "The Mulligatawny Guards," the good work progressed with sailorlike speed and system. The bare, dreary room grew gay with greenery. Stitched to the matting-walls with sennit there appeared letters, words and finally complete inscriptions: "Peas on Erth and Goodwill Toward Man," "Daisy Kirke, the Seaman's Star," "Merry Crissmas," and "God Bless Our Hom."

Daisy clapped her hands with delight, and did not stint her praise or approval. Occasionally she would stand up on

the "bridge" to anxiously point out a crooked letter or call attention to a doubtful spelling; and her little heart overflowed with satisfaction at the brisk "Ay, ay, miss," that greeted her smallest criticism. Mr. Bob worked like a horse, and not only made things jump, but kept a sharp watch as well on the unguarded utterances of his mates. Once, at some remark of Mr. "Tod's," he flared up like a lion, and, stepping close to Mr. Tod with his fist clinched, said: "Drop that, Toddy, d'ye 'ear? Drop it!"—and stared at him so fierce and splendid that Mr. Tod fell back, and mumbled something about "No offense," and, "It kinder ripped out unbeknownst, Bob, old cock!"

By the time it was all finished dusk was falling. The room had been beautifully swept out, and likewise the porch, and Mr. Bell was in the act of dancing a fascinating clog to Papa Benson's "Soldier's Joy" on the concertina, when Nantok rushed in, shouting that Mr. Kirke was coming! And, indeed, she had no sooner given the news than it was confirmed by the whale-boat's crew, whose voices could be heard far across the water, lustily singing at their paddles.

A sort of consternation descended on the Band of Hope. "Hell!" exclaimed Mr. Dutton, and dropped his broom with a crash. There was a mad scurry to escape. The little president was forgotten in the pellmell rush, and from the height of her table, she perceived her friends flying away without a word of farewell. No, not all. The faithful Mr. Bob, quiet and masterful even in that panicky moment of the missionary's return, came up to her, and, taking her hand in both his own, nuzzled it long and lovingly against his cheek.

"Little Daisy," he said, and his voice sounded kind of strange and different, "I want you to give a message to your pa—a message from me, you say to 'im—and that is, he'll never 'ave no more trouble with the boys down the shore. And if any of them gets fresh, or gives him any lip, or 'oots—you tell 'im this, Daisy—I'll break every bone of 'is body,

so 'elp me, Moses. And it ain't because of 'im, or anythink the like or that—but because he's the father of the darlindest little gal that ever breathed, and the sweetest and the dearest."

Daisy flung her arms around his neck and kissed him; and as her face pressed against his, rough as mahogany and hairy as a mat, she felt it all wet with tears!

Daisy was still wondering what it was that could make Mr. Bob cry, when he suddenly let her go, and walked out of the door in his funny, heavy, lurch-

ing sea walk, looking straight before him, and unheeding the "Happy Noo Year, Mr. Bob!" she called after him in a pitiful little voice.

"Poor Mr. Bob!" said Daisy to herself, and then, happening to put her hand to her hair, she discovered that the red ribbon was gone!

"He must have stole it for a keep-sake when I was kissing him!" she exclaimed. "Oh, you bad, bad Mr. Bob!"

But her eyes sparkled, nevertheless, as she ran out to greet papa and mamma.



## CHRISTMASTIDE

THERE is no summer now!

Bare hangs each hapless bough,  
Bare lies the once green earth,  
Stilled is each bright bird's mirth.

What then shall compensate  
For hills made desolate?

The very streams are locked,  
And where the white sheep flocked  
The whiter snow now lies,  
A bitter, chill surprise.

What gain for this our grief,  
For loss of flower and leaf?

Lo, on our hearths aspire  
The many-jeweled fire;  
And in the evening's leisure,  
In comradeship's pure pleasure,  
All woes men put aside.  
This is the Christmastide!

Love in an Infant's guise  
Smiles at us with warm eyes.  
This is hard winter's crown,  
Shining the old griefs down.

This then shall compensate—  
Love finds His lost estate!

CLINTON DANGERFIELD.

# BLIND MAN'S HOLIDAY

B  
O. Henry



**A**LAS for the man and for the artist with the shifting point of perspective! Life shall be a confusion of ways to the one; the landscape shall rise up and confound the other. Take the case of Lorison. At one time he appeared to himself to be the feeblest of fools; at another he conceived that he followed ideals so fine that the world was not yet ready to accept them. During one mood he cursed his folly; possessed by the other, he bore himself with a serene grandeur akin to greatness: in neither did he attain the perspective.

Generations before, the name had been "Larsen." His race had bequeathed him its fine-strung, melancholy temperament, its saving balance of thrift and industry.

From his point of perspective he saw himself an outcast from society, forever to be a shady skulker along the ragged edge of respectability; a denizen *des trois-quarts de monde*, that pathetic spheroid lying between the *haut* and the *demi*, whose inhabitants envy each of their neighbors, and are scorned by both. He was self-condemned to this opinion, as he was self-exiled, through it, to this quaint Southern city a thousand miles from his former home. Here he had dwelt for longer than a year, knowing but few, keeping in a subjective world of shadows which was invaded at times by the perplexing bulks of jarring realities. Then he fell in love with a girl whom he met in a cheap restaurant, and his story begins.

The Rue Chartres, in New Orleans, is a street of ghosts. It lies in the quarter where the Frenchman, in his prime,

set up his translated pride and glory; where, also, the arrogant don had swaggered, and dreamed of gold and grants and ladies' gloves. Every flagstone has its grooves worn by footsteps going royally to the wooing and the fighting. Every house has a princely heartbreak; each doorway its untold tale of gallant promise and slow decay.

By night the Rue Chartres is now but a murky fissure, from which the groping wayfarer sees, flung against the sky, the tangled filigree of Moorish iron balconies. The old houses of monsieur stand yet, indomitable against the century, but their essence is gone. The street is one of ghosts to whosoever can see them.

A faint heartbeat of the street's ancient glory still survives in a corner occupied by the Café Carabine d'Or. Once men gathered there to plot against kings, and to warn presidents. They do so yet, but they are not the same kind of men. A brass button will scatter these; those would have set their faces against an army. Above the door hangs the sign board, upon which has been depicted a vast animal of unfamiliar species. In the act of firing upon this monster is represented an unobtrusive human leveling an obtrusive gun, once the color of bright gold. Now the legend above the picture is faded beyond conjecture; the gun's relation to the title is a matter of faith; the menaced animal, wearied of the long aim of the hunter, has resolved itself into a shapeless blot.

The place is known as "Antonio's," as the name, white upon the red-lit transparency, and gilt upon the windows, attests. There is a promise in "Antonio"; a justifiable expectancy of savory things in oil and pepper and

wine, and perhaps an angel's whisper of garlic. But the rest of the name is "O'Riley." Antonio O'Riley!

The Carabine d'Or is an ignominious ghost of the Rue Chartres. The café where Bienville and Conti dined, where a prince has broken bread, is become a "family restaurant."

Its customers are working men and women, almost to a unit. Occasionally you will see chorus girls from the cheaper theaters, and men who follow avocations subject to quick vicissitudes; but at Antonio's—name rich in Bohemian promise, but tame in fulfillment—manners debonair and gay are toned down to the "family" standard. Should you light a cigarette, mine host will touch you on the "arrum" and remind you that the proprieties are menaced. "Antonio" entices and beguiles from fiery legend without, but "O'Riley" teaches decorum within.

It was at this restaurant that Lorison first saw the girl. A flashy fellow with a predatory eye had followed her in, and had advanced to take the other chair at the little table where she stopped, but Lorison slipped into the seat before him. Their acquaintance began, and grew, and now for two months they had sat at the same table each evening, not meeting by appointment, but as if by a series of fortuitous and happy accidents. After dining, they would take a walk together in one of the little city parks, or among the panoramic markets where exhibits a continuous vaudeville of sights and sounds. Always at eight o'clock their steps led them to a certain street corner, where she prettily but firmly bade him good-night and left him. "I do not live far from here," she frequently said, "and you must let me go the rest of the way alone."

But now Lorison had discovered that he wanted to go the rest of the way with her, or happiness would depart, leaving him on a very lonely corner of life. And at the same time that he made the discovery, the secret of his banishment from the society of the good laid its finger in his face and told him it must not be.

Man is too thoroughly an egoist not to be also an egotist; if he love, the object shall know it. During a lifetime he may conceal it through stress of expediency and honor, but it shall bubble from his dying lips, though it disrupt a neighborhood. It is known, however, that most men do not wait so long to disclose their passion. In the case of Lorison, his particular ethics positively forbade him to declare his sentiments, but he must needs dally with the subject, and woo by innuendo at least.

On this night, after the usual meal at the Carabine d'Or, he strolled, with his companion, down the dim old street toward the river.

The Rue Chartres perishes in the old Place d'Armes. The ancient Cabildo, where Spanish justice fell like hail, faces it, and the Cathedral, another provincial ghost, overlooks it. Its center is a little, iron-railed park of flowers and immaculate graveled walks, where citizens take the air of evenings. Pedestaled high above it, the general sits his cavorting steed, with his face turned stonily down the river toward English Turn, whence come no more Britons to bombard his cotton bales.

Often the two sat in this square, but to-night Lorison guided her past the stone-stepped gate, and still riverward. As they walked, he smiled to himself to think that all he knew of her—except that he loved her—was her name, Norah Greenway, and that she lived with her brother. They had talked about everything except themselves. Perhaps her reticence had been caused by his.

They came, at length, upon the levee, and sat upon a great, prostrate beam. The air was pungent with the dust of commerce. The great river slipped yellowly past. Across it Algiers lay, a longitudinal black bulk against a vibrant electric haze sprinkled with exact stars.

The girl was young and of the piquant order. A certain bright melancholy pervaded her; she possessed an untarnished, pale prettiness doomed to please. Her voice, when she spoke, dwarfed her theme. It was the voice capable of investing little subjects with

a large interest. She sat at ease, bestowing her skirts with the little womanly touch, serene, as if the be-grimed pier were a summer garden. Lorison poked the rotting boards with his cane.

He began by telling her that he was in love with some one to whom he durst not speak of it. "And why not?" she asked, accepting swiftly his fatuous presentation of a third person of straw. "My place in the world," he answered, "is none to ask a woman to share. I am an outcast from honest people; I am wrongly accused of one crime, and am, I believe, guilty of another."

Thence he plunged into the story of his abdication from society. The story, pruned of his moral philosophy, deserves no more than the slightest touch. It is no new tale, that of the gambler's declension. During one night's sitting he lost, and then had imperiled a certain amount of his employer's money, which, by accident, he carried with him. He continued to lose, to the last wager, and then began to gain, leaving the game winner to a somewhat formidable sum. The same night his employer's safe was robbed. A search was had; the winnings of Lorison were found in his room, their total forming an accusative nearness to the sum purloined. He was taken, tried and, through incomplete evidence, released, smatched with the sinister *devoirs* of a disagreeing jury.

"It is not in the unjust accusation," he said to the girl, "that my burden lies, but in the knowledge that from the moment I staked the first dollar of the firm's money I was a criminal—no matter whether I lost or won. You see why it is impossible for me to speak of love to her."

"It is a sad thing," said Norah, after a little pause, "to think what very good people there are in the world."

"Good?" said Lorison.

"I was thinking of this superior person whom you say you love. She must be a very poor sort of creature."

"I do not understand."

"Nearly," she continued, "as poor a sort of creature as yourself."

"You do not understand," said Lorison, removing his hat and sweeping back his fine, light hair. "Suppose she loved me in return, and were willing to marry me. Think, if you can, what would follow. Never a day would pass but she would be reminded of her sacrifice. I would read a condescension in her smile, a pity even in her affection, that would madden me. No. The thing would stand between us forever. Only equals should mate. I could never ask her to come down upon my lower plane."

An arc light faintly shone upon Lorison's face. An illumination from within also pervaded it. The girl saw the rapt, ascetic look; it was the face either of Sir Galahad or Sir Fool.

"Quite starlike," she said, "is this unapproachable angel. Really too high to be grasped."

"By me, yes."

She faced him suddenly. "My dear friend, would you prefer your star fallen?" Lorison made a wide gesture.

"You push me to the bald fact," he declared; "you are not in sympathy with my argument. But I will answer you so. If I could reach my particular star, to drag it down, I would not do it; but if it were fallen, I would pick it up, and thank Heaven for the privilege."

They were silent for some minutes. Norah shivered, and thrust her hands deep into the pockets of her jacket. Lorison uttered a remorseful exclamation.

"I'm not cold," she said. "I was just thinking. I ought to tell you something. You have selected a strange confidante. But you cannot expect a chance acquaintance, picked up in a doubtful restaurant, to be an angel."

"Norah!" cried Lorison.

"Let me go on. You have told me about yourself. We have been such good friends. I must tell you now what I never wanted you to know. I am—worse than you are. I was on the stage . . . I sang in the chorus . . . I was pretty bad, I guess . . . I stole diamonds from the prima donna . . . they arrested me . . . I gave most



of them up, and they let me go . . . I drank wine every night . . . a great deal . . . I was very wicked, but——"

Lorison knelt quickly by her side and took her hands.

"Dear Norah!" he said, exultantly. "It is you, it is you I love! You never guessed it, did you? 'Tis you I meant all the time. Now I can speak. Let me make you forget the past. We have both suffered; let us shut out the world, and live for each other. Norah, do you hear me say I love you?"

"In spite of——"

"Rather say because of it. You have come out of your past noble and good. Your heart is an angel's. Give it to me."

"A little while ago you feared the future too much to even speak."

"But for you; not for myself. Can you love me?"

She cast herself, wildly sobbing, upon his breast.

"Better than life—than truth itself—than everything."

"And my own past," said Lorison, with a note of solicitude—"can you forgive and——"

"I answered you that," she whispered, "when I told you I loved you." She leaned away, and looked thoughtfully at him. "If I had not told you about myself, would you have—would you——"

"No," he interrupted; "I would never have let you know I loved you. I would never have asked you this—Norah, will you be my wife?"

She wept again.

"Oh, believe me; I am good now—I am no longer wicked! I will be the best wife in the world. Don't think I am—bad any more. If you do I shall die, I shall die!"

While he was consoling her, she brightened up, eager and impetuous. "Will you marry me to-night?" she said. "Will you prove it that way? I have a reason for wishing it to be to-night. Will you?"

Of one of two things was this exceeding frankness the outcome: either of importunate brazenness or of utter

innocence. The lover's perspective contained only the one.

"The sooner," said Lorison, "the happier I shall be."

"What is there to do?" she asked. "What do you have to get? Come! You should know."

Her energy stirred the dreamer to action.

"A city directory first," he cried, gayly, "to find where the man lives who gives licenses to happiness. We will go together and rout him out. Cabs, cars, policemen, telephones and ministers shall aid us."

"Father Rogan shall marry us," said the girl, with ardor. "I will take you to him."

An hour later the two stood at the open doorway of an immense, gloomy brick building in a narrow and lonely street. The license was tight in Norah's hand.

"Wait here a moment," she said, "till I find Father Rogan."

She plunged into the black hallway, and the lover was left standing, as it were, on one leg, outside. His impatience was not greatly taxed. Gazing curiously into what seemed the hallway to Erebus, he was presently reassured by a stream of light that bisected the darkness, far adown the passage. Then he heard her call, and fluttered lampward, like the moth. She beckoned him through a doorway into the room whence emanated the light. The room was bare of nearly everything except books, which had subjugated all its space. Here and there little spots of territory had been reconquered. An elderly, bald man, with a superlatively calm, remote eye, stood by a table with a book in his hand, his finger still marking a page. His dress was somber and appertained to a religious order. His eye denoted an acquaintance with the perspective.

"Father Rogan," said Norah, "this is he."

"The two of ye," said Father Rogan, "want to get married?"

They did not deny it. He married

them. The ceremony was quickly done. One who could have witnessed it, and felt its scope, might have trembled at the terrible inadequacy of it to rise to the dignity of its endless chain of results.

Afterward the priest spake briefly, as if by rote, of certain other civil and legal addenda that either might or should, at a later time, cap the ceremony. Lorison tendered a fee, which was declined, and before the door closed after the departing couple Father Rogan's book popped open again where his finger marked it.

In the dark hall Norah whirled and clung to her companion, tearful.

"Will you never, never be sorry?"

At last she was reassured.

At the first light they reached upon the street, she asked the time, just as she had each night. Lorison looked at his watch. Half-past eight.

Lorison thought it was from habit that she guided their steps toward the corner where they always parted. But, arrived there, she hesitated, and then released his arm. A drug store stood on the corner; its bright, soft light shone upon them.

"Please leave me here as usual to-night," said Norah, sweetly. "I must—I would rather you would. You will not object? At six to-morrow evening I will meet you at Antonio's. I want to sit with you there once more. And then—I will go where you say." She gave him a bewildering, bright smile, and walked swiftly away.

Surely it needed all the strength of her charm to carry off this astounding behavior. It was no discredit to Lorison's strength of mind that his head began to whirl. Pocketing his hands, he rambled vacuously over to the druggist's windows, and began assiduously to spell over the names of the patent medicines therein displayed.

As soon as he had recovered his wits, he proceeded along the street in an aimless fashion. After drifting for two or three squares, he flowed into a somewhat more pretentious thoroughfare, a way much frequented by him in his solitary ramblings. For here was a row of

shops devoted to traffic in goods of the widest range of choice—handiworks of art, skill and fancy, products of nature and labor from every zone.

Here, for a time, he loitered among the conspicuous windows, where was set, emphasized by congested floods of light, the cunningest spoil of the interiors. There were few passers, and of this Lorison was glad. He was not of the world. For a long time he had touched his fellow man only at the gear of a leveled cog-wheel—at right angles, and upon a different axis. He had dropped into a distinctly new orbit. The stroke of ill fortune had acted upon him, in effect, as a blow delivered upon the apex of a certain ingenious toy, the musical top, which, when thus buffeted while spinning, gives forth, with scarcely retarded motion, a complete change of key and chord.

Strolling along the pacific avenue, he experienced a singular, supernatural calm, accompanied by an unusual activity of brain. Reflecting upon recent affairs, he assured himself of his happiness in having won for a bride the one he had so greatly desired, yet he wondered mildly at his dearth of active emotion. Her strange behavior in abandoning him without valid excuse on his bridal eve aroused in him only a vague and curious speculation. Again, he found himself contemplating, with complaisant serenity, the incidents of her somewhat lively career. His perspective seemed to have been queerly shifted.

As he stood before a window near a corner, his ears were assailed by a waxing clamor and commotion. He stood close to the window to allow passage to the cause of the hubbub—a procession of human beings, which rounded the corner and headed in his direction. He perceived a salient hue of blue and a glitter of brass about a central figure of dazzling white and silver, and a ragged wake of black, bobbing figures.

Two ponderous policemen were conducting between them a woman dressed as if for the stage, in a short, white, satiny skirt reaching to the knees, pink stockings, and a sort of sleeveless bod-

ice bright with relucant, armor-like scales. Upon her curly, light hair was perched, at a rollicking angle, a shining tin helmet. The costume was to be instantly recognized as one of those amazing conceptions to which competition has harried the inventors of the spectacular ballet. One of the officers bore a long cloak upon his arm, which, doubtless, had been intended to veil the candid attractions of their effulgent prisoner, but, for some reason, it had not been called into use, to the vociferous delight of the tail of the procession.

Compelled by a sudden and vigorous movement of the woman, the parade halted before the window by which Lorison stood. He saw that she was young, and, at the first glance, was deceived by a sophisticated prettiness of her face, which waned before a more judicious scrutiny. Her look was bold and reckless, and upon her countenance, where yet the contours of youth survived, were the finger marks of old age's credentialed courier, Late Hours.

The young woman fixed her unshrinking gaze upon Lorison, and called to him in the voice of the wronged heroine in straits:

"Say! You look like a good fellow; come and put up the bail, won't you? I've done nothing to get pinched for. It's all a mistake. See how they're treating me! You won't be sorry, if you'll help me out of this. Think of your sister or your girl being dragged along the streets this way! I say, come along, now, like a good fellow."

It may be that Lorison, in spite of the unconvincing bathos of this appeal, showed a sympathetic face, for one of the officers left the woman's side, and went over to him.

"It's all right, sir," he said, in a husky, confidential tone: "she's the right party. We took her after the first act at the Green Light Theater, on a wire from the chief of police of Chicago. It's only a square or two to the station. Her rig's pretty bad, but she refused to change clothes—or, rather," added the officer, with a smile, "to put

on some. I thought I'd explain matters to you so you wouldn't think she was being imposed upon."

"What is the charge?" asked Lorison.

"Grand larceny. Diamonds. Her husband is a jeweler in Chicago. She cleaned his show case of the sparklers, and skipped with a comic opera troupe."

The policeman, perceiving that the interest of the entire group of spectators was centered upon himself and Lorison—their conference being regarded as a possible new complication—was fain to prolong the situation—which reflected his own importance—by a little after-piece of philosophical comment.

"A gentleman like you, sir," he went on, affably, "would never notice it, but it comes in my line to observe what an immense amount of trouble is made by that combination—I mean the stage, diamonds and light-headed women who aren't satisfied with good homes. I tell you, sir, a man these days and nights wants to know what his women folks are up to."

The policeman smiled a good-night, and returned to the side of his charge, who had been intently watching Lorison's face during the conversation, no doubt for some indication of his intention to render succor. Now, at the failure of the sign, and at the movement made to continue the ignominious progress, she abandoned hope, and addressed him thus, pointedly:

"You damn chalk-faced quitter! You was thinking of giving me a hand, but you let the cop talk you out of it the first word. You're a dandy to tie to. Say, if you ever get a girl, she'll have a picnic. Won't she work you to the queen's taste! Oh, my!" She concluded with a taunting, shrill laugh that rasped Lorison like a saw. The policemen urged her forward; the delighted train of gaping followers closed up the rear; and the captive Amazon, accepting her fate, extended the scope of her maledictions so that none in hearing might seem to be slighted.

Then there came upon Lorison an overwhelming revulsion of his perspec-

tive. It may be that he had been ripe for it, that the abnormal condition of mind in which he had for so long existed was already about to revert to its balance; however, it is certain that the events of the last few minutes had furnished the channel, if not the impetus, for the change.

The initial determining influence had been so small a thing as the fact and manner of his having been approached by the officer. That agent had, by the style of his accost, restored the loiterer to his former place in society. In an instant he had been transformed from a somewhat rancid prowler along the fishy side streets of gentility into an honest gentleman, with whom even so lordly a guardian of the peace might agreeably exchange the compliments.

This, then, first broke the spell, and set thrilling in him a resurrected longing for the fellowship of his kind, and the rewards of the virtuous. To what end, he vehemently asked himself, was this fanciful self-accusation, this empty renunciation, this moral squeamishness through which he had been led to abandon what was his heritage in life, and not beyond his deserts? Technically, he was uncondemned; his sole guilty spot was in thought rather than deed, and cognizance of it unshared by others. For what good, moral or sentimental, did he slink, retreating like the hedgehog from his own shadow, to and fro in this musty Bohemia that lacked even the picturesque?

But the thing that struck home and set him raging was the part played by the Amazonian prisoner. To the counterpart of that astounding belligerent—identical, at least, in the way of experience—to one, by her own confession, thus far fallen, had he, not three hours since, been united in marriage. How desirable and natural it had seemed to him then, and how monstrous it seemed now! How the words of diamond thief number two yet burned in his ears: "If you ever get a girl, she'll have a picnic." What did that mean but that women instinctively knew him for one they could hoodwink? Still again, there reverberated the policeman's sapient

contribution to his agony: "A man these days and nights wants to know what his women folks are up to." Oh, yes, he had been a fool; he had looked at things from the wrong standpoint.

But the wildest note in all the clamor was struck by pain's forefinger, jealousy. Now, at least, he felt that keenest sting—a mounting love unworthily bestowed. Whatever she might be, he loved her; he bore in his own breast his doom. A grating, comic flavor to his predicament struck him suddenly, and he laughed creakingly as he swung down the echoing pavement. An impetuous desire to act, to battle with his fate, seized him. He stopped upon his heel, and smote his palms together triumphantly. His wife was—where? But there was a tangible link; an outlet more or less navigable, through which his derelict ship of matrimony might yet be safely towed—the priest!

Like all imaginative men with pliable natures, Lorison was, when thoroughly stirred, apt to become tempestuous. With a high and stubborn indignation upon him, he retraced his steps to the intersecting street by which he had come. Down this he hurried to the corner where he had parted with—an asstringent grimace tinctured the thought—his wife. Thence still back he harked, following through an unfamiliar district his stimulated recollections of the way they had come from that preposterous wedding. Many times he went abroad, and nosed his way back to the trail, furious.

At last, when he reached the dark, calamitous building in which his madness had culminated, and found the black hallway, he dashed down it, perceiving no light or sound. But he raised his voice, hailing loudly; reckless of everything but that he should find the old mischiefmaker with the eyes that looked too far away to see the disaster he had wrought. The door opened, and in the stream of light Father Rogan stood, his book in hand, with his finger marking the place.

"Ah!" cried Lorison. "You are the man I want. I had a wife of you a few hours ago. I would not trouble you,

but I neglected to note how it was done. Will you oblige me with the information whether the business is beyond remedy?"

"Come inside," said the priest; "there are other lodgers in the house, who might prefer sleep to even a gratified curiosity."

Lorison entered the room and took the chair offered him. The priest's eyes looked a courteous interrogation.

"I must apologize again," said the young man, "for so soon intruding upon you with my marital infelicities, but, as my wife has neglected to furnish me with her address, I am deprived of the legitimate recourse of a family row."

"I am quite a plain man," said Father Rogan, pleasantly; "but I do not see how I am to ask you questions."

"Pardon my indirectness," said Lorison; "I will ask one. In this room tonight you pronounced me to be a husband. You afterward spoke of additional rites or performances that either should or could be effected. I paid little attention to your words then, but I am hungry to hear them repeated now. As matters stand, am I married past all help?"

"You are as legally and as firmly bound," said the priest, "as though it had been done in a cathedral, in the presence of thousands. The additional observances I referred to are not necessary to the strictest legality of the act, but were advised as a precaution for the future—for convenience of proof in such contingencies as wills, inheritances and the like."

Lorison laughed harshly.

"Many thanks," he said. "Then there is no mistake, and I am the happy benedict. I suppose I should go stand upon the bridal corner, and when my wife gets through walking the streets she will look me up."

Father Rogan regarded him calmly.

"My son," he said, "when a man and woman come to me to be married I always marry them. I do this for the sake of other people whom they might go away and marry if they did not mar-

ry each other. As you see, I do not seek your confidence; but your case seems to me to be one not altogether devoid of interest. Very few marriages that have come to my notice have brought such well-expressed regret within so short a time. I will hazard one question: were you not under the impression that you loved the lady you married, at the time you did so?"

"Loved her!" cried Lorison, wildly. "Never so well as now, though she told me she deceived and sinned and stole. Never more than now, when, perhaps, she is laughing at the fool she cajoled and left, with scarcely a word, to return to God only knows what particular line of her former folly."

Father Rogan answered nothing. During the silence that succeeded, he sat with a quiet expectation beaming in his full, lambent eye.

"If you would listen—" began Lorison. The priest held up his hand. "As I hoped," he said. "I thought you would trust me. Wait but a moment." He brought a long clay pipe, filled and lighted it.

"Now, my son," he said.

Lorison poured a twelvemonth's accumulate confidence into Father Rogan's ear. He told all; not sparing himself or omitting the facts of his past, the events of the night, or his disturbing conjectures and fears.

"The main point," said the priest, when he had concluded, "seems to me to be this—are you reasonably sure that you love this woman whom you have married?"

"Why," exclaimed Lorison, rising impulsively to his feet—"why should I deny it? But look at me—am I fish, flesh or fowl? That is the main point to me, I assure you."

"I understand you," said the priest, also rising, and laying down his pipe. "The situation is one that has taxed the endurance of much older men than you—in fact, especially much older men than you. I will try to relieve you from it, and this night. You shall see for yourself into exactly what predicament you have fallen, and how you shall, possibly, be extricated. There is no evi-

dence so credible as that of the eyesight."

Father Rogan moved about the room, and donned a soft black hat. Buttoning his coat to his throat, he laid his hand on the doorknob. "Let us walk," he said.

The two went out upon the street. The priest turned his face down it, and Lorison walked with him through a squalid district, where the houses loomed, awry and desolate looking, high above them. Presently they turned into a less dismal side street, where the houses were smaller, and, though hinting of the most meager comfort, lacked the concentrated wretchedness of the more populous by-ways.

At a segregated, two-story house Father Rogan halted, and mounted the steps with the confidence of a familiar visitor. He ushered Lorison into a narrow hallway, faintly lighted by a cobwebbed hanging lamp. Almost immediately a door to the right opened and a dingy Irishwoman protruded her head.

"Good-evening to ye, Mistress Geehan," said the priest, unconsciously, it seemed, falling into a delicately flavored brogue. "And is it yourself can tell me if Norah has gone out again, the night, maybe?"

"Oh, it's yer blessid riverence! Sure and I can tell ye the same. The purty darlin' wint out, as usual, but a bit later. And she says: 'Mother Geehan,' says she, 'it's me last noight out, praise the saints, this noight is!' And, oh, yer riverence, the swate, beautiful drame of a dress she had this toime! White satin and silk and ribbons, and lace about the neck and arrums—'twas a sin, yer riverence, the gold was spint upon it."

The priest heard Lorison catch his breath painfully, and a faint smile flickered across his own clean-cut mouth.

"Well, then, Mistress Geehan," said he, "I'll just step upstairs and see the bit boy for a minute, and I'll take this gentleman up with me."

"He's awake, thin," said the woman. "I've just come down from sitting wid him the last hour, tilling him fine shtor-

ries of ould County Tyrone. 'Tis a greedy gossoon, it is, yer riverence, for me shtories."

"Small the doubt," said Father Rogan. "There's no rocking would put him to slape the quicker, I'm thinking."

Amid the woman's shrill protest against the retort, the two men ascended the steep stairway. The priest pushed open the door of a room near its top.

"Is that you already, sister?" drawled a sweet, childish voice from the darkness.

"It's only ould Father Denny come to see ye, darlin'; and a foine gentleman I've brought to make ye a gr-r-rand call. And ye resaves us fast aslape in bed! Shame on yez manners!"

"Oh, Father Denny, is that you? I'm glad. And will you light the lamp, please? It's on the table by the door. And quit talking like Mother Geehan, Father Denny."

The priest lit the lamp, and Lorison saw a tiny, towlsled-haired boy, with a thin, delicate face, sitting up in a small bed in a corner. Quickly, also, his rapid glance considered the room and its contents. It was furnished with more than comfort, and its adornments plainly indicated a woman's discerning taste. An open door beyond revealed the blackness of an adjoining room's interior.

The boy clutched both of Father Rogan's hands. "I'm so glad you came," he said; "but why did you come in the night? Did sister send you?"

"Off wid ye! Am I to be sint about, at me age, as was Terence McShane, of Ballymahone? I came on me own r-r-responsibility."

Lorison had also advanced to the boy's bedside. He was fond of children; and the wee fellow, laying himself down to sleep alone in that dark room, stirred his heart.

"Aren't you afraid, little man?" he asked, stooping down beside him.

"Sometimes," answered the boy, with a shy smile, "when the rats make too much noise. But nearly every night,



when sister goes out, Mother Geehan stays a while with me, and tells me funny stories. I'm not often afraid, sir."

"This brave little gentleman," said Father Rogan, "is a scholar of mine. Every day from half-past six to half-past eight—when sister comes for him—he stops in my study, and we find out what's in the inside of books. He knows multiplication, division and fractions; and he's troubling me to begin with the chronicles of Ciaran of Clonmacnoise, Corurac McCullenan and Cuan O'Lochain, the gr-r-reat Irish historians." The boy was evidently accustomed to the priest's Celtic pleasantries. A little, appreciative grin was all the attention the insinuation of pedantry received.

Lorison, to have saved his life, could not have put to the child one of those vital questions that were wildly beating about, unanswered, in his own brain. The little fellow was very like Norah; he had the same shining hair and candid eyes.

"Oh, Father Denny," cried the boy, suddenly, "I forgot to tell you! Sister is not going away at night any more! She told me so when she kissed me good-night as she was leaving. And she said she was so happy, and then she cried. Wasn't that queer? But I'm glad; aren't you?"

"Yes, lad. And now, ye omadhaun, go to sleep, and say good-night; we must be going."

"Which shall I do first, Father Denny?"

"Faith, he's caught me again! Wait till I get the sassenach into the annals of Tageruach, the hagiographer; I'll give him enough of the Irish idiom to make him more respectful."

The light was out, and the small, brave voice bidding them good-night from the dark room. They groped downstairs, and tore away from the garrulity of Mother Geehan.

Again the priest steered them through the dim ways, but this time in another direction. His conductor was serenely silent, and Lorison followed his example to the extent of seldom speaking. Serene he could not be.

His heart beat suffocatingly in his breast. The following of this blind, menacing trail was pregnant with he knew not what humiliating revelation to be delivered at its end.

They came into a more pretentious street, where trade, it could be surmised, flourished by day. And again the priest paused; this time before a lofty building, whose great doors and windows in the lowest floor were carefully shuttered and barred. Its higher apertures were dark, save in the third story, the windows of which were brilliantly lighted. Lorison's ear caught a distant, regular, pleasing thrumming, as of music above. They stood at an angle of the building. Up, along the side nearest them, mounted an iron stairway. At its top was an upright, illuminated parallelogram. Father Rogan had stopped, and stood, musing.

"I will say this much," he remarked, thoughtfully: "I believe you to be a better man than you think yourself to be, and a better man than I thought some hours ago. But do not take this," he added, with a smile, "as much praise. I promised you a possible deliverance from an unhappy perplexity. I will have to modify that promise. I can only remove the mystery that enhanced that perplexity. Your deliverance depends upon yourself. Come."

He led his companion up the stairway. Halfway up, Lorison caught him by the sleeve. "Remember," he gasped, "I love that woman."

"You desired to know."

"I— Go on."

The priest reached the landing at the top of the stairway. Lorison, behind him, saw that the illuminated space was the glass upper half of a door opening into the lighted room. The rhythmic music increased as they neared it; the stairs shook with the mellow vibrations.

Lorison stopped breathing when he set foot upon the highest step, for the priest stood aside, and motioned him to look through the glass of the door.

His eye, accustomed to the darkness, met first a blinding glare, and then he made out the faces and forms of many people, amid an extravagant display of

splendid robings—billowy laces, brilliant hued finery, ribbons, silks and misty drapery. And then he caught the meaning of that jarring hum, and he saw the tired, pale, happy face of his wife, bending, as were a score of others, over her sewing machine—toiling, toiling. Here was the folly she pursued, and the end of his quest.

But not his deliverance, though even then remorse struck him. His shamed soul fluttered once more before it retired to make room for the other and better one. For, to temper his thrill of joy, the shine of the satin and the glimmer of ornaments recalled the disturbing figure of the bespangled Amazon, and the base duplicate histories lit by the glare of footlights and stolen diamonds. It is past the wisdom of him who only sets the scenes, either to praise or blame the man. But this time his love overcame his scruples. He took a quick step, and reached out his hand for the doorknob. Father Rogan was quicker to arrest it and draw him back.

"You use my trust in you queerly," said the priest, sternly. "What are you about to do?"

"I am going to my wife," said Lorison. "Let me pass."

"Listen," said the priest, holding him firmly by the arm. "I am about to put you in possession of a piece of knowledge of which, thus far, you have scarcely proved deserving. I do not think you ever will; but I will not dwell upon that. You see in that room the woman you married, working for a frugal living for herself, and a generous comfort for an idolized brother. This building belongs to the chief costumer of the city. For months the advance orders for the coming Mardi Gras festivals have kept the work going day and night. I myself secured employment here for Norah. She toils here each night from nine o'clock until daylight, and, besides, carries home with her some of the finer costumes requiring more delicate needlework, and works there part of the day. Somehow,

you two have remained strangely ignorant of each other's lives. Are you convinced now that your wife is not walking the streets?"

"Let me go to her," cried Lorison, again struggling, "and beg her forgiveness!"

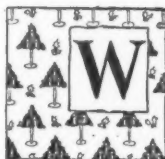
"Sir," said the priest, "do you owe me nothing? Be quiet. It seems so often that Heaven lets fall its choicest gifts into hands that must be taught to hold them. Listen again. You forgot that repentant sin must not compromise, but look up, for redemption, to the purest and best. You went to her with the fine-spun sophistry that peace could be found in a mutual guilt; and she, fearful of losing what her heart so craved, thought it worth the price to buy it with a desperate, pure, beautiful lie. I have known her since the day she was born; she is as innocent and unsullied in life and deed as a holy saint. In that lowly street where she dwells she first saw the light, and she has lived there ever since, spending her days in generous self-sacrifice for others. Och, ye spalpeen!" continued Father Rogan, raising his finger in kindly anger at Lorison. "What for, I wonder, could she be afther making a fool of herself, and shammin' her swate soul with lies, for the like of you!"

"Sir," said Lorison, trembling, "say what you please of me. Doubt it as you must, I will yet prove my gratitude to you, and my devotion to her. But let me speak to her once now, let me kneel for just one moment at her feet, and——"

"Tut, tut!" said the priest. "How many acts of a love drama do you think an old bookworm like me capable of witnessing? Besides, what kind of figures do we cut, spying upon the mysteries of midnight millinery! Go to meet your wife to-morrow, as she ordered you, and obey her thereafter, and maybe some time I shall get forgiveness for the part I have played in this night's work. Off wid yez down the shtairs, now! 'Tis late, and an old man like me should be takin' his rest."

# FAIRY GODFATHERS

*By Julien  
Gordon*



WHEN I was very young it was considered quite unadvisable, if not indecent, for women to accept presents from men, unless, indeed, from a husband, uncle or brother. We have changed all that. The generation which preceded mine belonged, in its women, to the fluttering female type, the sort which is always suspicious. We still meet leftover old ladies never content with the announcements of time-tables or conductors, but who ask every small boy at the railway station: "At what hour does my train leave?" He does not know, but tells her, and she eventually clammers into the wrong wagon.

My mother once revealed to me that at a court ball in Paris a foreign diplomat dared to compliment her complexion and pretty arms. She at once fled to my father for protection. My father, a man of the world, no doubt calmed her. When I asked: "But what could have happened to you, mamma, in the middle of the great court ball?" she replied, severely: "You cannot be a child of mine." Whose, then? The question distressed me for weeks. These facts go to prove that ideas suffer radical variations. Among these none have so completely altered as the views with regard to permissible presents. The man who was paying court twenty-five years ago never sent to his innamorata more substantial tokens of

his affection than chocolate creams, roses, a song, a book of verse, a popular novel. This was the limit. In sentimental friendship between married persons, gifts, save perhaps at Christmas time, could never have been exchanged. They were distinctly an indelicacy; to offer them, *gauche*; to accept them, vulgar and shift.

When one opens one's eyes on surrounding conditions, one cannot but remark the modification of these rules of conduct. Where a man once sent bonbons—and this, of course, is more in the commerce of men with married women and widows than with maidens—he now sends pheasants, venison, trout or wine. A husband remarked lately that he liked best the one of his wife's admirers who sent trout, as he was fond of fish and could not eat roses. Instead of candy, the admirer now sends a framed engraving, or, if he is rich, a valuable oil painting; instead of flowers, a handsome vase. Instead of a paper-bound volume, he selects an edition in leather of some standard work for the library. The fairy godfather is of modern growth. He plays to-day an important rôle in many a modest *ménage*. And, with a shrug of one's shoulders, one asks oneself: "Why not?" He speculates in Wall Street for madame and mails her the profits. When he loses he does not let her suffer. He also gives "points" to her husband. He despatches his gardeners to put her grounds in order, buys the baby a new bonnet, repapers the hall stairs and furnishes the back

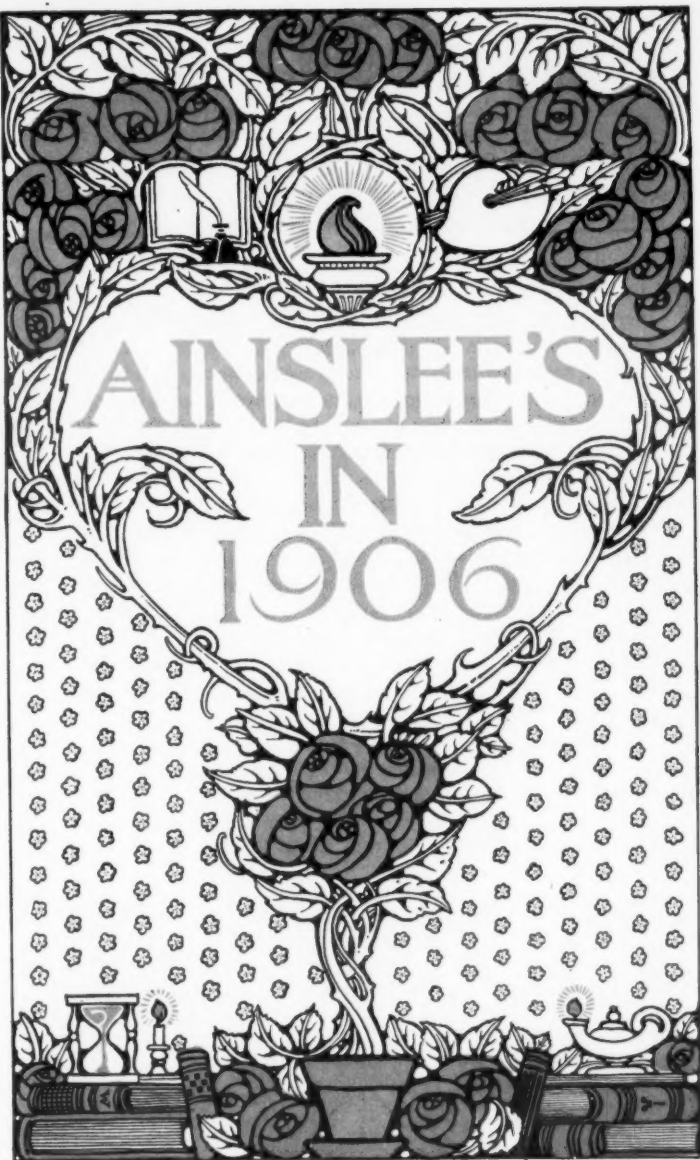
bedroom. Sometimes he has a double. One lately ordered a case of pint bottles of "extra dry" to be sent to a certain lady. Lunching with her not long after, he was served with a quart. He complained to the dealer—an Irishman—of his mistake. "Sir," replied the ready Pat, "did it never occur to you that while you were sending pints to the lady, another party was sending in his quarts?"

My manicure, who, like all manicures, is communicative, told me lately that one of her clients, a woman of position, exhibited to her on two occasions checks for thousands of dollars sent to her by an admirer—a rich, lonely individual who does not know exactly what to do with his money. "Just take this," he wrote, "and blow it out." So she was "blowing." "And I am quite sure," said the manicure, "that this lady is an honest woman." "What do you mean by that?" I asked. "Why, she adores her husband and children." I marveled at the survival of this definition. Why should tradition insist that love the accident is love the virtue. Nevertheless, I was inclined to think my manicure right in her diagnosis of the case. Had the lady been what is called "frail," she would never have displayed those checks. Such an exhibition of ingenuous courage and imprudent vanity would have been impossible to her. Of her taste we will not speak. At any rate, the manicure did not betray her. I never even guessed her name, so she at least had not misplaced her confidence.

I remember—to return to the past—that my mother had a friend whose husband, dying in financial difficulties, left her "hard up," with four little girls. She had a relative, a paralytic bachelor of means, who wanted to befriend her. He offered to build an addition to her house which would double its value and enable her to rent it with ease when she so desired. I am sure that the offer was delicately made. He was a high-minded, honorable gentleman. He was devotedly attached to one of her little daughters, and doubtless intended to make her his heir. But this lady, because she was a youngish widow and

comely, decided that to accept any favors from this poor invalid of sixty would compromise her. She put up her shutters, leaving him well on the outside of them. Presumably he was disgusted with life, for he promptly died. It was found that he had not left his money to the brilliant child who would have done it honor, but to a male cousin called Dan, who was good but stupid. I knew Dan personally, and can vouch for the latter attribute. "Dan is stupid, but good," the world said, the little world in which Dan counted. It so happened that Dan followed his cousin to the grave in less than one year. Then there appeared upon the boards an unacknowledged wife, one of those women whom my mother and her friend described, in awed whispers, as "a dreadful person." She managed to gobble up all of Dan's inheritance, wasting it prodigally upon the progeny of some former equivocal alliance, and poor Dan was proved to have been more than ever stupid, but not good.

This is about the amount of *savoir faire* women possessed in the good old days when fairy godfathers were thought ill of! In the more remote periods of chivalry it was the mode for men to go out heavily armed and do battle for unprotected women. Lancelot once came and informed Guinevere that he had just slain five knights and a couple of dragons—snorting ones—to save from their perils two frightened ladies. Guinevere met this announcement with considerable asperity, telling him that he was a busybody, that these women's wrongs were not his affair, and finally, tradition tells us, she "drove him from her presence." Her own husband was so wise that she doubtless felt called upon to rebuke folly where she could find it. We wonder if Lancelot had sent these creatures—we feel certain she called them creatures—a ham, a lobster, a parasol, a sewing machine, a billiard table, or a grand piano, if Guinevere would have been less angry. But, after all, Guinevere was not an honest woman, so her anger was not legitimate and her opinions are valueless. It seems to be a





Booth Tarkington

# 1906



Ashton Hilliers

"Promise is most given when least is said." Therefore, there will be no waste of words in this outline of what AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE will do in 1906.

The names of the authors who will contribute to AINSLEE'S in the next twelve months tell the story more pointedly and eloquently than anything we could say.

Additional explanation would be not only superfluous, but impertinent.

But while we rest content to let them speak for us so far as the future is concerned, it is only fair to our readers, to ourselves and to our contributors, to recall some matters which are past. They are interesting, too, just at this time.

The policy which has been pursued in making up this magazine is a very simple one, and may be summed up in the statement that it is to make each number as good as it can possibly be made.

In carrying out this idea we have taken each issue, not as a standard to be equalled by the next, but as a finished achievement to be excelled.

We have made this a matter of prime importance, and we are able to say now that since AINSLEE'S took its

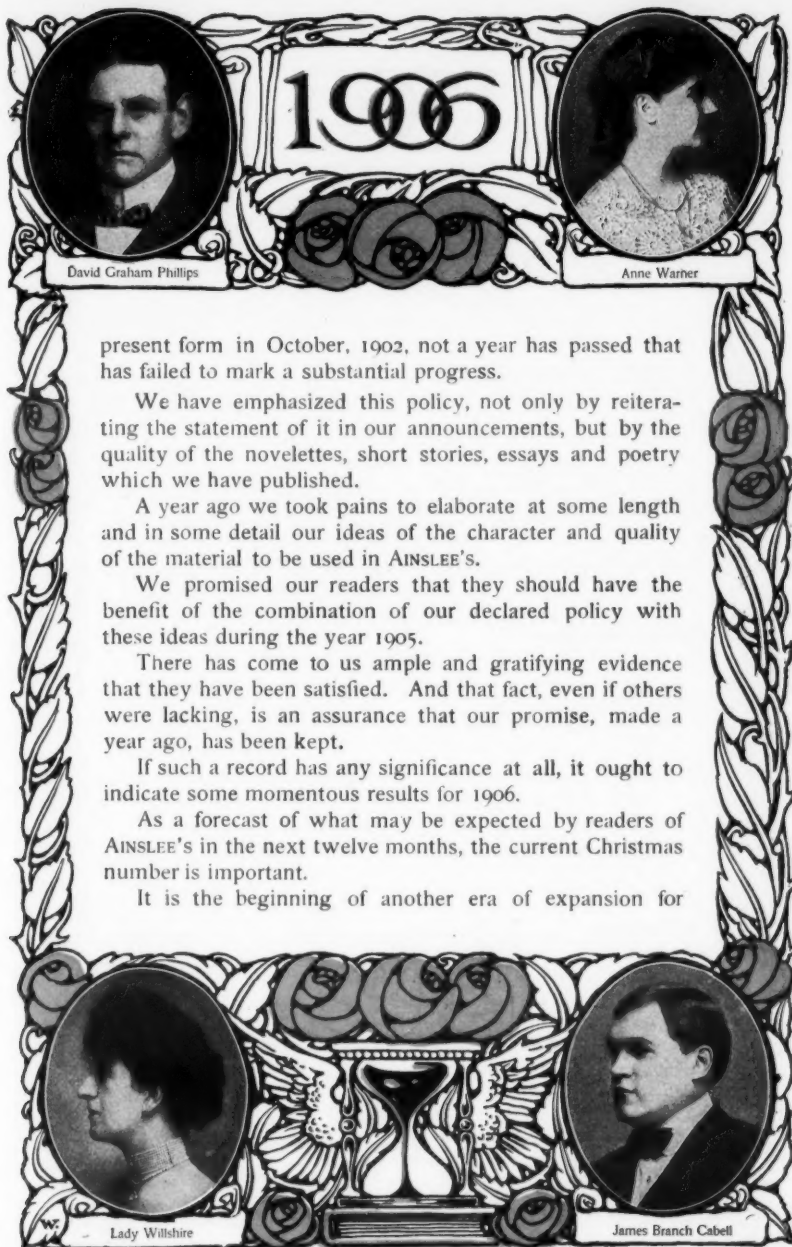


Katherine C. Thurston



Mrs. Wilson Woodrow





David Graham Phillips

Anne Warner

present form in October, 1902, not a year has passed that has failed to mark a substantial progress.

We have emphasized this policy, not only by reiterating the statement of it in our announcements, but by the quality of the novelettes, short stories, essays and poetry which we have published.

A year ago we took pains to elaborate at some length and in some detail our ideas of the character and quality of the material to be used in AINSLEE'S.

We promised our readers that they should have the benefit of the combination of our declared policy with these ideas during the year 1905.

There has come to us ample and gratifying evidence that they have been satisfied. And that fact, even if others were lacking, is an assurance that our promise, made a year ago, has been kept.

If such a record has any significance at all, it ought to indicate some momentous results for 1906.

As a forecast of what may be expected by readers of AINSLEE'S in the next twelve months, the current Christmas number is important.

It is the beginning of another era of expansion for

Lady Willshire

James Branch Cabell



1906

Arthur Stringer

Jack London

AINSLIE'S MAGAZINE. And the path that has been selected will be followed vigorously.

This list of contributors will show what we propose to do:

Edith Wharton,  
Booth Tarkington,  
Kate Jordan,  
Ashton Hilliers,  
Katherine C. Thurston,  
Edgar Saltus,  
Jack London,  
Ellis Parker Butler,  
Baroness von Hutten,  
Elizabeth Duer,  
Margaret Sutton Briscoe,  
H. B. Marriott-Watson,  
Arthur Stringer,  
Henry C. Rowland,  
O. Henry,  
Lady Willshire,  
Julien Gordon,  
David Graham Phillips,  
Theodosia Garrison,

Lloyd Osbourne,  
Rex E. Beach,  
Marie Van Vorst,  
L. Frank Tooker,  
Mrs. Wilson Woodrow,  
Joseph C. Lincoln,  
Archibald Eyre,  
James Branch Cabell,  
Anne Warner,  
Madison Cawein,  
Grace MacGowan Cooke,  
Constance Smedley,  
Lucia Chamberlain,  
Mary Stewart Cutting,  
W. A. Fraser,  
Alan Dale,  
Maurice Maeterlinck,  
Ella Wheeler Wilcox,  
Anne Rittenhouse.

Rex E. Beach

Theodosia Garrison



W. A. Fraser

Marie Van Vorst

### W. A. FRASER

is one of the most popular and successful writers of fiction, both novels and short stories, of the day.

In the opinion of a great many people his stories of British India rank with Kipling's. But it is as a writer of stories of the race track that Mr. Fraser chiefly excels.

He not only knows the subject thoroughly, but besides his familiarity with the facts he infuses into his narrative the enthusiasm of a genuine sportsman, an unbounded love of horses and a sympathetic understanding of human nature.

During the coming year he will have six racing stories in AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE.

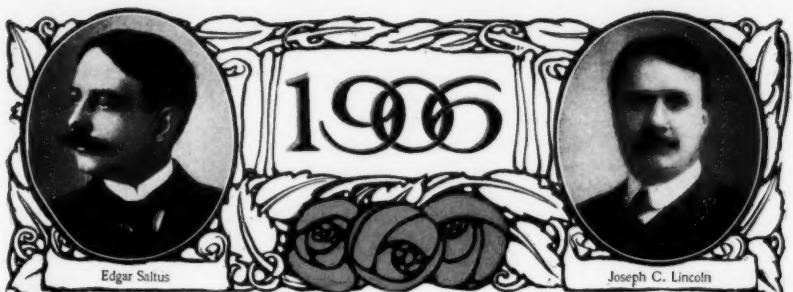
### O. HENRY

stands without a rival in his special field of fiction. In completeness of detail, in delicacy of workmanship and in clearness of point his stories are marvels of literary excellence.

He has been a frequent contributor in the past to AINSLEE'S, in which his earliest and most of his best work has appeared. The coming year will bring more of it to our readers.

Madison Cawein

Grace MacGowan Cooke



Edgar Saltus

Joseph C. Lincoln

### ASHTON HILLIERS

is an author who will be remembered by readers of AINSLEE'S by his two stories, "The Best Man" and "The Steeplechase," which we published some time ago. No better short stories of their kind have been printed anywhere.

Some of the best examples of his work will appear in our pages in 1906.

### BOOTH TARKINGTON

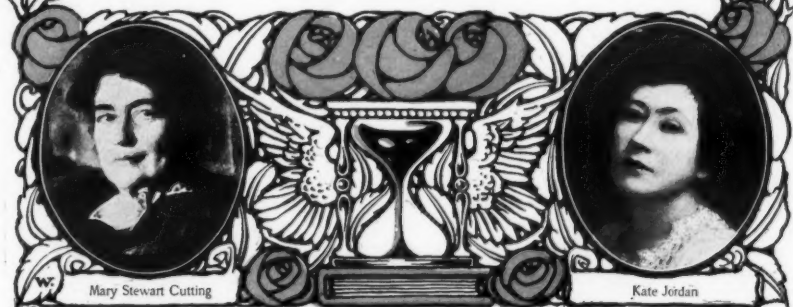
of course needs no advertising. Everybody knows his work and everybody is eager to read his stories. It is entirely within the bounds of reason to predict that "Monsieur Beaucaire" will, if it has not already, become a classic.

### MARIE VAN VORST

is perhaps best known as one of the authors of "The Woman Who Toils," a book which drew from President Roosevelt his remarks about race suicide.

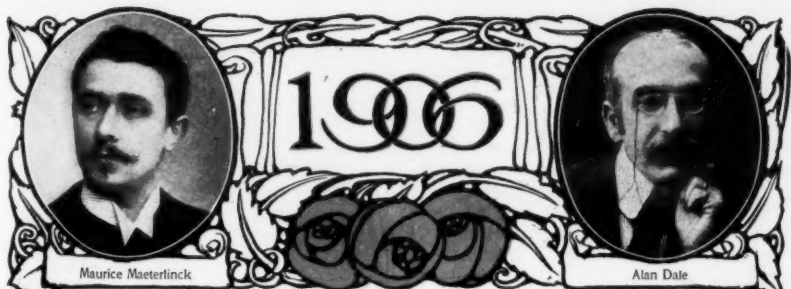
She has, however, had great success as a writer of fiction, having published two rather extraordinary novels.

Her short story, "Mrs. Evremond," published in AINSLEE'S for September, 1905, is considered by many critics as the best short story of the year.



Mary Stewart Cutting

Kate Jordan



Maurice Maeterlinck

Alan Dale

The subject of essays has received a great deal of very serious consideration. To provide for and secure the material which will conform to the character of AINSLEE'S as "the magazine that entertains" is one of the most difficult tasks that confront us. The preparations that have been made will, it is hoped, produce results commensurate, in some degree at least, with the amount of thought that has been given to them. An interesting variety of topics has been arranged which, we are sure, will furnish to the readers of AINSLEE'S the diversion and possibly the information that they are accustomed to look for.

Some of the notable people whose views on these topics will appear in the magazine in the course of the year are

Rear Admiral Joseph B. Coghlan,  
Julien Gordon,  
Hon. Oscar S. Straus,  
Maurice Maeterlinck,

David Graham Phillips,  
Robert Stewart,  
Lady Willshire,  
Sara Bernhardt.

Alan Dale will continue his interesting comments on current theatrical matters.



Julien Gordon

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

# 1906

## Lloyd Osbourne,

who, as everybody knows, was a pupil of Robert Louis Stevenson and his collaborator as well in some of his best work, will contribute

### SIX STORIES

to AINSLEE'S during 1906. This represents practically the whole of Mr. Osbourne's literary product for twelve months, so that we are, to all intents and purposes, justified in claiming that he will write for AINSLEE'S exclusively during that period.

His latest work includes two very popular books, "The Motormaniacs" and "Baby Bullet."



Edith Wharton

## Edith Wharton

occupies a position of isolated pre-eminence among contemporary novelists, of her own sex at any rate.

Her work has come to be regarded, and justly so, as a model of construction and literary finish, besides displaying an extraordinary insight into character and a power of analysis of motives that can result only from the keenest observation. Besides this, all her stories, from "The Greater Inclination" to "The House of Mirth," are filled with an absorbing human interest.

Her latest story, "The Introducers," in two parts, is now appearing in AINSLEE'S, and she will have another during the year.



Lloyd Osbourne



natural craving of the male to support the female, and this amiable aspiration, methinks, should be encouraged and not frowned down. Why should a woman accept a nosegay which costs fifty dollars and refuse gloves, silk stockings or a veal pie? This is mere prejudice, a tyranny of fixed ideas. A girl will bet for gloves on the race track, and will wear them if won. Why, then, should she return them if sent as a present?

We know a fairy godfather who has given a "dot" to the daughter of the lady he respectfully admires, and thus helped the girl to marry the man of her choice, who is poor. To him the paltry sum was as the snuffing of a candle in an electrically lighted hall. We

repeat: "Why not?" The good old days were bad old days. People had evil imaginings, evil surmises, were unduly alarmed at nothing in particular. Greater practical common sense has been reached, and those who by voice or pen commend it are benefactors of the race. And if every woman must have twenty-five children—as our admirable President recommends—what is to become of these puling thousands, hurled unwillingly, wailing, into a hungry world, if there be no gift-giving, lonely men to help the pot boil? He should be asked this question. We earnestly hope that his next address will be to the fairy godfathers of the United States, pointing out their duties, privileges and perquisites.



## HOME

NO house is mine in the north or south;  
 No lands in the land of my sires.  
 Roofless, the careless winds have spent  
 The smoke of my vagrant fires.

No name have I in the clanging town;  
 No seat with the grave and wise.  
 The snows and dusts of the trails forget  
 That have blinded my foolish eyes.

But safe and warm and steadfast-true  
 (God, how was the wonder done!)  
 The heart of a woman shelters me—  
 From the lonely winds and the sun.

THEODORE ROBERTS.

# THE MAN IN THE MOON

BY Mrs. C. N.

Williamson



HE way they came to know about him was this.

Cissy ran into the room and exclaimed: "Oh, mother, oh, Gwen, there's a Man in the Moon!"

Her mother only frowned, and said: "Don't be silly," for she was reading an important letter, which might affect her whole future and that of her big girl and her little one. But Gwen—the big girl—laughed kindly, and held out her hand to the little girl.

"Have you only just found out that there's a Man in the Moon?" she asked. "He's always been there and always will be, I suppose—unless he eats up all the green cheese."

"But I mean the real Moon—the Moon on the river," explained Cissy. "You know, that poor old, shabby white house boat named the Moon, that has been 'To Let or For Sale' for so long. Somebody's taken it. There's a man there, and he was good to me. Flops went into the water after a stick three times, and the last time she got a cramp or something, and I was so worried about her when she couldn't get out that I cried and howled, and the Man jumped out of the Moon and waded deep in and got her."

"Oh, my dear child, what an adventure!" cried Gwen, and the word "adventure" in connection with one of her daughters caused Mrs. Greatorex to look up from the letter. Then the story had to be repeated, with elaborations, to her. How Miss Minns, the governess, had not screamed or howled, but had had a palpitation at sight of Flops' danger, and considered the Man in the

Moon a very brave and courteous gentleman.

"Nonsense, he can't be a gentleman," said Mrs. Greatorex, "or he couldn't possibly think of living in that ramshackle old thing, and especially at this season of the year. Who ever heard of a sane human being taking even the best of house boats in November? He must be mad, or an escaped convict."

"Rather a conspicuous abode for an escaped convict," commented Gwen. "What is the Man in the Moon like, Cissy?"

"Oh, terribly handsome," replied the child, "although old. He must be over thirty; and his clothes looked so poor. I did hope, when he got them wet, that he had others to change with, but Miss Minns wouldn't let me ask him."

By this time Mrs. Greatorex was lost in her letter again, and had forgotten the Man in the Moon. It really was an absorbing letter, as absorbing as any chapter of romance, Gwen might have thought, for she had an imaginative and picturesque mind—almost as picturesque as her lovely face and whole charming personality. But Mrs. Greatorex was different, and her point of view regarding the letter, and everything else in life, was entirely practical.

As for the letter, it concerned a will; and Mrs. Greatorex desperately hoped that the will concerned her, or might be made to do so in the end. A very rich old man had died lately in California. He was a cousin of Mrs. Greatorex's, and that would have been hopeful, as he had no nearer living relations than she; but, unfortunately, he had others no more distant, living in the neighborhood of Rookham, where

Mrs. Greatorrex lived; and, still more unfortunately, the rich old man—whose name was also Greatorrex—had made a will leaving every penny of his immense fortune to a man who was no relation to him at all.

This would naturally have settled matters forever, as far as the expectations of Samuel Greatorrex's cousins were concerned, if it had not been for the magnificent eccentricities of the person who had come into the money. He was a doctor whose skill had kept the old man alive for several years longer than he had dared hope to live, and when death had finally occurred, in California, the heir of the million or two had written to the relatives.

He had said that he did not wish to keep the fortune for himself. He would take only the sum left to him originally, the millions having been an afterthought, in a codicil. He was not a poor man, he explained, and the few thousand pounds which his old friend had in the first instance wished to bestow upon him would be entirely satisfactory as a remembrance.

His desire was to carry out an idea of old Mr. Greatorrex's, abandoned of late years, though once seriously discussed.

Mr. Greatorrex had in those days planned to come home to England and pay visits among his relatives, whom he had never seen, decide which ones were best fitted to administer a fortune, and leave the bulk of it accordingly, each member of the family receiving at least some small legacy.

Now, Dr. John Hampton's plan was to do what Samuel Greatorrex had once intended. He would come to England, would acquaint himself with Mr. Greatorrex's relatives, and dispose of the money among them as seemed good to him after forming his impressions.

Such a letter had been sent to each of the three families who made up the little circle of the dead man's relatives; and in each was inclosed a photograph of Dr. Hampton, showing him an elderly, gray-haired man, who looked like an intelligent provincial solicitor. It was this document which Mrs. Grea-

torex had been reading when Cissy came bursting into the room with her childish chatter.

The relations were asked to arrange between themselves at which house Dr. Hampton should visit first; for, said he, as Sir James and Lady Pelham, with their two sons, and Mr. and Mrs. Norwood, with their flock of children, as well as the widowed Mrs. Greatorrex, all had houses within a few miles of each other, it could matter little in what order he made their acquaintance.

This was not, however, the opinion of the Pelhams, the Norwoods, or Mrs. Greatorrex. Each family felt a prior claim to the good Dr. Hampton, and each family went to the expense of a cablegram, quite a long and intricate cablegram, explaining that claim and urging it. A day or two later an answer came back from New York by wire to each. Dr. Hampton had decided in favor of Sir James Pelham, socially the most important of the little band of relatives, and he was sailing at once. He named the ship, the date of his landing, and suggested that the Norwoods and the Greatorrexs should be invited to meet him at dinner on the night of his arrival.

Neither of the disappointed families could refuse. To do so would have been like cutting off one of their best features to spite the face of which it had been a conspicuous ornament. It was galling to think that the arbiter of their destiny had been "nobbled" by the Pelhams, and that they must meet him at the obnoxious people's house, but Dr. Hampton's slightest wish must be law, and they were obliged to bend to it. The Norwoods accepted, and so did Mrs. Greatorrex, for herself and her two daughters—since even the youngest cousins were to be present at the feast.

Then, just as everybody had been wrought up to the highest pitch of excitement, an inopportune and unwelcome thing happened. The vicar asked them all, as a personal favor to him, to be kind to the Man in the Moon.

The Man's name, it seemed, was Jack Forestier. The vicar, who was a good-natured, unworldly, altogether insignifi-

cant sort of person, had met him when traveling in Canada or somewhere, and, in fact, was responsible for his taking the house boat. Jack Forestier, according to the vicar, was "by way of being an artist," with a great deal of talent, though he had never made money by his painting. He could just afford to hire the Moon, with its few sticks of furniture which had stood rotting for years, and in the good weather, when he got stronger—he was said to be recovering after an illness—he would be able to do a little painting, for which the beauty of the surrounding neighborhood would be an inspiration.

"Oh, mother, we will be nice to him, won't we?" exclaimed Gwen, after the vicar's call. "You know he saved Flops from being drowned, and he might have taken his death of cold, as he's an invalid. Poor fellow, he's too likely to do that in any case, living in that poky, damp old Moon. He ought not to do it."

"There is no reason why a house boat, even though old, should be damp, simply because it rests on the water," said Mrs. Greatorex, coldly. This was an opinion formed hastily, though firmly, to suit the circumstances; for she did not intend to indulge the vicar by being "nice" to the Man in the Moon, and she did not wish to be made constantly uncomfortable through having him pitied by her daughter.

She considered the vicar a stupid, fussy little man, who preached dull sermons and did foolish deeds. He was old, and talked of retirement. And there was a rumor that when he went a delightful bachelor with a title would get the living. Thus there was nothing to be gained by pleasing the vicar.

"At least, you'll invite Mr. Forestier to dinner soon, and again for Christmas, won't you, mother?" persisted Gwen. "And if you should ask him to paint just a little, little picture of the river front of our house—you know you've often said you'd like to have it done—perhaps it would make a lot of difference to him, and he could move into better quarters, through the cold weather, at all events."

"If you think I can afford twenty pounds or so for an unknown artist, who probably isn't an artist," said Mrs. Greatorex, "you are much mistaken. Have you seen this person, may I ask, my dear, that you take up his cause so warmly?"

"No," replied Gwen, entirely unembarrassed. "It's only because what dear old Mr. Denham told us about him interested me, and made me sorry for the poor man. And, besides, I'm grateful to him for Flops. Miss Minns said he was a gentleman."

"Miss Minns is barely a lady, and no judge of the opposite sex, though she is good enough for a nursery governess," returned Mrs. Greatorex, with the thin-lipped look which warned her children when it was most unsafe to contradict her. "We have plenty of acquaintances—too many, really, and I have no wish to make any more undesirable ones, to humor a fancy of Mr. Denham's."

Gwen said no more. She was nineteen and her mother fifty; so, of course, there could be no question as to which was right—at all events, no question which could be spoken aloud. But very soon after, Gwen did see the Man in the Moon, when she was walking with Cissy; and then she knew that, had the meeting occurred before instead of after, her answer the other day could not have been given so frankly and without embarrassment.

For there was something about the Man in the Moon which aroused in the girl a very keen and very personal interest, the moment she set eyes upon him.

She had imagined him old, or at least elderly, but he was neither. If he was not precisely handsome, he had one of the nicest faces which Gwen had ever seen; better than if he were a "beauty man," she thought. He was dark, with a strong mouth and chin and wistful gray eyes. Though he had not the air of an invalid, he was certainly thin, and rather pale; lonely looking, too, as he walked slowly along the towing path, with his hands in the pockets of his shabby but well-cut coat.

"He is a gentleman," she said to herself, as Cissy whispered excitedly: "There's the Moon Man;" and she thought that he ought to be wearing an overcoat. But perhaps he couldn't afford it; and a pang of sympathy shot through her warm heart. She did hope that Mr. Denham had not told him about asking her mother to be "nice," or he would be thinking them a hateful, snobbish family, as they had made no sign.

By this time he had come near, and taken off his hat with a smile for Cissy—a nice smile, as it ought to have been for such a face as his.

"How do you do?" asked the child, cordially, and little Flops, the enterprising dachshund, recognized her rescuer with engaging gratitude. It would have needed a heart of stone to pass on without taking Cissy's outstretched hand and stooping to pat one of Flops' velvet ears; and men with eyes like the Moon Man's do not have hearts of stone.

The pause made speech on the part of the grown-up sister a necessity, or Gwen thought so. She therefore, with a pretty shyness, thanked the Man for preserving the valuable life of Flops. He responded in a delightful voice, which had, the girl fancied, a slightly un-English accent, as if the speaker might be an Australian or a Canadian.

They talked a little, and Cissy talked a great deal. She announced that Miss Minns had a bad cold, and that her sister, Gwen, was taking her for a walk. "We hoped we'd see you," she said.

This made Gwen blush violently, and Gwen was beautiful when she blushed. It was too difficult to explain that if anyone had been so indecorous as to hope such a thing it must have been Cissy, and that, as for her, she had had no thought of the Moon and its tenant when she consented to choose the tow-path for a walk. But she looked at the Man from the Moon, and he looked at her, and she felt that he understood.

"Isn't it most awfully cold in the Moon?" asked Cissy.

"No," said the Man; "I manage to keep warm."

"But aren't you lonely?" persisted the child.

"Sometimes, a little," the Man admitted. And perhaps Gwen only imagined that he looked wistful. But it gave her as guilty a pang as if she had been sure.

"I should be afraid of the water rats," remarked Cissy, gazing at the Moon from a distance. "My sister says you keep green cheese, and rats like that, don't they, even water ones?"

The Man laughed at this suggestion as to his housekeeping, but now Gwen was bound to explain; and this led to further conversation. The two girls had been walking toward the Moon, and the Man had evidently been coming home, so he was allowed, even encouraged, to stroll by their side as far as his own residence.

"Oh, how I should like to see what it looks like inside!" exclaimed Cissy.

The Man looked at Gwen. "If I dared, I should be delighted to—" he began; but very sweetly, if firmly, the elder girl thanked him and assured him that it was impossible—for that day. They must not be out too long; but perhaps another time, if he would ask them—

"You shouldn't have said that, Cissy," Gwen reproached the child, when they had bidden the Man good-by.

"Why not?" asked the little girl. "I'm sure he would have liked to have us."

Gwen secretly thought it not improbable—unless he were ashamed of his forlorn surroundings. And she was certain that she would have liked to go.

One day, not long after, Dr. John Hammond arrived; and the band of relatives—mostly wearing decent mourning for the dead Samuel Grea-torex—drove to Sir James Pelham's place to dine and meet him. Gwendolen alone, among the grown members of the company, refused to wear even so much as a black sash with her simple white dinner dress. "I should feel a hypocrite," she said; and even her mother's irritable counsels did not prevail.

The Pelhams, the Norwoods and the

Greatorex, though united by ties of blood, were united in no other way; and lately they had been less fond of one another than before, for the element of jealousy and suspicion had entered into their relations. But, though they would doubtless have submitted to torture, if not too prolonged or too severe, rather than exchange sentiments on such a subject, they could not have helped agreeing on one point that night of the family dinner party. There could be no two opinions about Dr. Hammond. He was a singularly disagreeable little man.

In looks he was mild and inoffensive, with rather a good head, but his manner was insufferable—or would have been insufferable in anybody else. He was nervous, fussy, rude, obstinate, overbearing, monstrously conceited, boringly long-winded, and a dozen other detestable things besides. The assembly could not help finding all this out before dinner was half over, but they did not give way to depression. Far from it; they labored to conciliate and please the hateful little person, not only as if they had a Christian duty to perform, but as though they were reveling in his society. They hung upon his words; they smiled at his most unpleasant cynicisms as if they had been listening to the wit of Sydney Smith. They felt the most absorbing interest in his anecdotes, they cared to hear nothing so much as the story of his life, which appeared to have been an abysmally dull one.

Thus did the grown-ups; all but Gwen, who for her scornful indifference was scolded heartily in the carriage going home, and would have been slapped if she had been nine, like Cissy, instead of nineteen. As for the children, Cissy was the youngest. All the others had been drilled into beautiful behavior; and Cissy went to sleep, which was at least inoffensive.

The worst of it was, from Mrs. Greatorex's point of view, that Dr. Hammond seemed at first inclined to notice Gwen; and she was looking wonderfully pretty in her white frock, perhaps all the prettier for being scorn-

ful. It would have been so easy for her to create a good impression. The elderly American could not have helped being pleased with her beauty, and there was another who noticed it, too—though not for the first time. Her cousin, Harry Pelham, said to himself that if the old brute handed over his ill-gotten gains to the Pelham family he could afford to propose to Gwen; while, if the bulk of the money should, by any unfortunate chance, fall to the Greatorex, he should certainly do so at the earliest opportunity.

Entirely owing to Gwen's contumacy—in her mother's opinion, at least—Dr. Hammond apparently transferred his wavering fancy to the eldest Norwood girl, and announced that, after a week's visit with the Pelhams, he would go next to the Norwoods, finishing the round at Mrs. Greatorex's, and letting his final decision be known on Christmas Day—the "day for making gifts," as he explained.

This gave the relatives three weeks to get in their best work at making good impressions, and all those who had reached years of discretion vied with one another in the effort; again excepting Gwen. That misguided young woman, in a scene with her mother, frankly pronounced Dr. Hammond a horrid man; said that as he must know he was hateful, he would only despise them for their hypocrisies, and she, for one, was not going to lay herself open to be despised. She refused to go with Mrs. Greatorex to make frequent calls on Lady Pelham and on Mrs. Norwood, and spent most of her time in the schoolroom with Cissy, as Miss Minns' cold had increased and she had been sent home in advance of the Christmas holidays.

The sisters took several walks together before Gwen could be induced to pass the Moon again, but one day Flops pattered ahead, along the towing path, and the girls followed. The Man in the Moon was not visible, but they had not gone far past the house boat when long-threatened rain began to fall in torrents. They turned to run back, and the Man appeared at the door of the



Moon, cordially inviting them to come in and wait until the storm should be over. It would have been silly and prim to refuse, Gwen thought, so she accepted.

The Moon was not pretty inside; indeed, it was even more dreary than she had fancied, and her heart ached for its lonely occupant; but there was a paraffin lamp-stove with a red glass front, and Gwen helped the Man in the Moon to make tea. The girls thought that they had stayed about twenty-five minutes when they said good-by, but really they had been in the Moon for more than an hour. Next day they were absolutely obliged to go back, as Gwen had promised to make the Man a cake, and Cissy had offered a kitten, which had been accepted eagerly. Then it appeared that the Man had taken a severe cold, and the big sister and the little one were very sympathetic. Gwen begged that he would send for the doctor, which he agreed to do, solely to please her, and instead of going directly home, the two stopped at the physician's house, in the village. Stammering a little, Gwen told the story of the acquaintance, bringing in Mr. Denham's name, explaining to the good old man that Mr. Forestier seemed to be poor, and she would like to pay the doctor's fee.

"Mother won't bother with him," said the girl, "so Cissy and I are obliged to show a little gratitude on our own account, for the sake of decency and of Mr. Denham."

Dr. Morley had known Mrs. Greatorex for many years, and quite understood the family difficulty. He said that he would not take any fee at all from the Man in the Moon. He went often to inquire for him, and so did Gwen and Cissy.

A few days before Christmas Dr. Hammond became the guest of the Greatorex, and Gwen's mother, in her anxiety that the girl should atone for past misdemeanors, tried first severity, then persuasion, in the hope of inducing her obstinate daughter to receive the important visitor with effusion.

"Horrid old man, I can hardly be

civil to him!" exclaimed Gwen. "But"—with a sudden thought—"I will be as nice as ever I can if you'll do one thing for me. Write to Mr. Forestier and ask him to Christmas dinner. I can't bear to think of—Mr. Denham's friend being left to spend his Christmas alone in that dingy old house boat; and you know Mr. Denham can't ask him, as he is away for Christmas at his brother's."

"How can we have a stranger then, even if I were willing for other reasons?" asked Mrs. Greatorex. "You know perfectly well that Dr. Hammond is to announce his decision on Christmas."

"Surely not at dinner," said Cissy.

"I suppose not. But before the Pelhams and Norwoods go."

"Well, Mr. Forestier will go first. He would have so far to walk, he would be sure to leave early."

Then followed a long and heated argument, but in the end Gwen triumphed. The situation appeared to Mrs. Greatorex well-nigh desperate, and as the fortune of the family might lie in the girl's hands, those same small hands must be allowed to pull the strings of circumstance for once. Besides, it might be that the Man in the Moon would have grace enough to refuse.

But he did not. He accepted; and he was the first arrival on Christmas evening. So early was he, in fact, that Mrs. Greatorex was not yet dressed for dinner, and Gwen flew down to entertain him. He looked very handsome in evening clothes, though they were a little shabby and had the air of having been put away for a long time. "Hired for the occasion," was what Dick Pelham whispered about them in Gwen's ear, somewhat later; but instead of prejudicing her against the Man from the Moon, the whisper made her more than ever his champion. "What if they are?" she retorted. "It's nothing against him if he's poor. He's the most interesting man I ever knew."

Dr. Hammond happened to be standing near at the moment—he was always pottering aimlessly about. "Who's that you're talking of?" he chirped, cu-

riously. "Who's the most interesting man you know?"

Gwen told him, fearlessly. "H'm!" said he, in his disagreeable, growling way. "I thought well-brought-up young ladies never considered poor men interesting. This one's an artist, I think you said, and lives in a house boat. Not a very eligible acquaintance."

"I'd rather give up most others," cried the girl, impulsively.

"I shall warn your mother, Miss Gwenn. He'll be proposing next."

"I wish he would!"

The words sprang from her lips in sheer defiance before she knew, and when they were irrevocably spoken she blushed till the tears stood in her eyes. She hoped that the two men who had heard would understand that she had not really meant what she said, but, then, the worst of it was, when she came to reflect, that she really did mean it; for she was in love with the Man from the Moon, and something in his eyes, when he had wished her "Many happy Christmases," would have told her that he cared for her—even if she hadn't guessed long before.

Just at this moment dinner was announced, and Gwen's place was next to Dr. Hammond. The Man in the Moon was on her other side, simply because Mrs. Gwenn had not known how else to dispose of him, as all the cousins had been asked by Mr. Denham to be kind, and all had ignored the request, as she had.

Gwen had made a certain promise to her mother, and she had been paid to keep it; accordingly she forced herself to smile on the cantankerous old gentleman who was, for obvious reasons, the family idol. But whether it was the benign influence of Christmas, or whether something had happened to please Dr. Hammond, suddenly he had ceased to be cantankerous. From the moment of sitting down at the table, he was changed as if by a miracle. His face, no longer puckered, beamed benevolently upon all; he made little jokes; he showed himself interested in the ideas of others.

Nobody knew what to make of him,

but the various members of each separate family hoped that the miracle augured something of good for them.

At last, when his health had been drunk, he rose and began to speak. "My friends," he said, in a milder voice than any one of the circle had heard from him until to-night, "you have all been very kind to me. I thank you for the welcome you have given to a stranger. You know why I came among you. I felt that, before deciding in what way the bulk of Samuel Gwenn's money should be bestowed, it was my duty to learn, if possible, who would be likely to make the best use of it. I wanted to find out for myself who was the kindest, most generous, most charitable and least spoiled by the world, among Samuel Gwenn's relatives, and I have at last been able to pick out that person."

"Dear Dr. Hammond, perhaps you forget that we have a stranger among us," Mrs. Gwenn ventured to break in.

The old man looked surprised. "A stranger?" he repeated.

"Mr. Forestier," she murmured, warningly.

Dr. Hammond smiled at her and then at the Man from the Moon. "That's not a stranger," said he. "Far from it. That's my son, Jack—John Forestier Walker, you know. He's a doctor, too. In fact, he was poor Gwenn's doctor. It's years since I retired on my laurels. You see, it was to him the money was left, and we've been, as one may say, working this job together. He depended on me to help him; I depended on him to help me."

Everyone was struck dumb. Not even Dick Pelham, who was seldom at a loss of words, could have spoken to save his life. And old Dr. Hammond, looking very grave now, turned to Gwen.

"It's Christmas," he said, "and I don't want to be harsh to anybody, so I won't criticise the conduct of the others. I will only put it in this way. You, Miss Gwenn, seem to me the only one among Samuel Gwenn's relations who will use his money as we

think it ought to be used—in making those around you happier. You are neither a snob nor a hypocrite. You are a good and true girl, and my son and I wish you joy of the great future which will be yours; don't we, Jack?"

The Man from the Moon did not answer, but he looked at the girl and smiled.

It seemed to Gwen that there was something of heaven in that smile; and it was the Man she thought of, not the money.

Afterward, when Gwen's engagement

to Jack Forestier Hammond was announced, the other relations, who had to be content with the dole of a few hundreds, said that they did not quite see where young Dr. Hammond's wonderful chivalry came in, as he got the girl and the fortune with her. But Gwen knew that she had not entered into the first plan of the Man in the Moon. She believed in him and loved him, as she had from the first, only a great deal more. And perhaps it may be as well for those who waste time in wishing for the Moon, to know that Dr. and Mrs. Hammond have bought it.



## HEIGHO, THE HOLLY!

DOWN the dales of Yule,  
Azure-glimmering,  
Seems the sly a pool  
Like the eyes of spring;  
Woe,—'tis vanishing;  
Hail the heart that's jolly!  
Now's the time to sing  
*Heigho, the holly!*

Down the dales of Yule  
Bells with golden ring,  
Drowning death and dule,  
Gleeful greetings fling;  
Hear them echoing  
Peal and lyric volley!  
Now's the time to sing  
*Heigho, the holly!*

Down the dales of Yule,  
Hark,—the jocund string!  
Joy, with royal rule,  
Bide, and be our king!  
Bounteous guerdons bring!  
Banish melancholy!  
Now's the time to sing  
*Heigho, the holly!*

### ENVOY.

Mirth, friend, that's the thing!  
Gloom is grievous folly!  
Now's the time to sing  
*Heigho, the holly!*

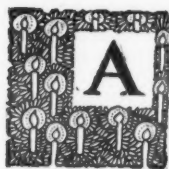
CLINTON SCOLLARD.



## CONVERSATIONS WITH EGERIA

### THE ART OF GIVING

by MRS. WILSON WOODROW



AND this is the 'glad Christmastide,'" said the Financier, and Egeria detected a note of dreariness in his voice—"the season when we are 'condemned to the fashion of a smiling face.'"

They were sitting before a birch-log fire, and the pale, lambent flame, once compared to young love, lighted up the shadows of the library. Without, the fine, thick snow fell constantly, and the December wind wailed through the branches of the leafless trees.

"Did you ever realize the power of a phrase?" asked Egeria, with apparent irrelevance. "We put our faith in shibboleths, we are mesmerized by sounds."

"Oh, I don't know; 'a rose——'" began the Financier, tritely.

"It would not," Egeria interrupted, in positive tones. "The very word 'rose' suggests 'splendid summer, and perfume and pride.' It glorifies, invests with sentiment, color and beauty, even the most abortive and scrubby specimens."

The Financier shrugged his shoulders. "You overwhelm me with words, if not with the weight of your argument," he added, with extreme gentleness. Then, hastily, as Egeria opened her mouth to speak: "What do you mean by your theory of the hypnotism of sounds?"

"It is not a theory; it is a recognized fact," she replied, defensively. "Have you never known it? Therein lies the secret of oratory—a little idea borrowed from nature. Who can listen to the musical plashing of fountains and not

become soothed and harmonized? Who can hear the drowsy hum of bees and not feel a delicious languor stealing over him? Whose spirit is not stirred and quickened by the rousing, scarlet blare of the trumpet?

"You yourself, as a 'plain business man,' are a rather commonplace person—a little below the salt, so to speak; but when mentioned as a 'financier,' a 'captain of industry,' a 'coal baron,' a railroad or an oil 'king,' you grow to the stature of the phrase, and are viewed as one of 'the lords of life.'"

The Financier's smile was faintly bitter. "But," he argued, "all this has nothing to do with Christmas and its attendant responsibilities—the giving of gifts, and the necessity of the smiling face."

"Why, Christmas was what we were talking about," contended Egeria.

The Financier ceased his abstracted poking of a log in order to make the sparks fly upward. "We were," he said, with painful distinctness, "discussing the hypnotism of sounds."

"Oh, that was merely a slight divagation about Robin Hood's barn," declared Egeria, unabashed. "Take that very word, 'Christmas'; what pictures does it suggest to the mind?"

The Financier reflected a moment. "Christmas-card effects," he said, at last. "Dark, pointed firs; rosy lights from church windows streaming across the snow; great halls full of holly and mistletoe and glowing Yule logs; everywhere feasting and laughter, giving and receiving, and a permeating atmosphere of glee, the spirit of Christmas jollity."

"That is the picture; how different is the reality. You wonder why it is that

every one else seems happy, imbued with the spirit of the season, while you are striving to conceal the fact that you feel yourself an alien and an intruder, rather forlorn and desolate under your mask of merriment."

"That sounds very much as if you might be the financier of fiction," said Egeria. "If so, cheer up, for this year you will enjoy Christmas as never before. At the eleventh hour your miser-like heart will be unexpectedly softened, and you will give your poor clerks, to whom you should have paid higher wages all year, a few extra dollars, and their surprise will be so overwhelming that they will be exuberantly grateful. This will be the beginning of your regeneration. Then you will stroll about the streets, still feeling somewhat sad and lonely, until presently you will meet two wan, angel-faced children, a boy and a girl, gazing wistfully in the windows of a toy shop. Attracted in spite of yourself, you draw near and learn from their innocent prattle that they are the offspring of a tenderly loved and long lost sister. You follow them to their tenement home, where, in a freezing cold but exquisitely clean room, you find your sister dying of pneumonia. The next day in the same room, now transformed and beautified with Christmas greens and handsome presents, your sister restored to health and the little ones dancing about in glee, you eat your Christmas plum pudding."

"Alas, I shall not—being a 'financier,' as you are pleased to call me, of *fact* and not of fiction. To-morrow I shall, instead, struggle through the crowded streets, cudgeling afresh my already sorely cudgeled brains. Man is a stupid, blundering creature, who looks with admiration at woman—woman, who seems to possess a kind of sixth sense in the selection of what is graceful, appropriate and charming at this time of remembrance and gifts."

Egeria laughed. "Shall I tell you what you really will do, O financier of fact and not of fiction? You will order a few bales of flowers, a few tons of candy, some books, some gloves, per-

haps some lace and jewels; and you will receive a gross or so of handkerchief and necktie cases, all abominably scented. Ah-h! The very thought of the presents you will get from women makes me sneeze, they will be so overpoweringly redolent of sachet powder!"

The Financier flushed. "It is a matter of sentiment, not of barter," he said, stiffly.

"Assuredly," agreed Egeria, equably; "but it has nearly become commercialized. It is our little human way of transmuting the ideal into the real, the sentimental into the practical. They are apt to become sordid and common and unclean in the process."

"I wonder," mused he, "if all this gift-bestowing, this setting aside of an especial season for it, is not a mere excuse for that instinctive longing to give which lies in every heart?"

"The sea gives her shells to the shingle, the earth gives her streams to the sea," murmured Egeria.

"Apparently a feminine instinct." He continued to follow his train of thought. "The sea gives *her* shells, the earth gives *her* streams. Nature, who is *she*, is a bounteous giver."

"Nature does not exhibit any particularly feminine attributes," argued Egeria. "She has no taste for bargains, and she saves nothing for the future; lays nothing aside for a rainy day. There is not a trace of the prudent housewife about her. Look how she wastes herself in the spring! She throws out banners of leaves and festoons of vines, and spills myriads of flowers. Then, her big tasks accomplished, she amuses herself with the most infinite and intricate detail. Every bare spot of ground, every fallen log, must be covered with lichens and moss and the lace of ferns. You do not find her saving anything over to help piece out her autumn splendors. She merely evolves new harmonies and subtleties of color, then scatters her gold and scarlet upon the wind, indifferent that the frost strips her fields and meadows. The cash and the credit may go together. She gives 'her cloak also,' and stands bare and shivering in the blast."

"Poor, reckless prodigal! Splendid refutation of the belief that another may filch from us anything that is ours! And suddenly, in an unexpected hour, we see her remote and dazzling, more royal than ever, in the ermine of snow, the jewels of ice!"

"Nevertheless, in spite of your somewhat florid eloquence, I claim that the art of giving—the most difficult and delicate art in the world, we agreed—lies with your sex." The Financier could be obstinate.

"No"—Egeria shook her head; "you are mistaken. Men are the givers of gifts, the 'great, glorious spendthrifts' of the world. Oh!"—impatiently, as the Financier laughed—"I am not speaking of money alone, but of ideas. It is naturally so. Woman has sat for centuries in her walled chamber, spinning and sighing, occasionally faring out to barter some eggs and pats of butter for sugar and tea at the corner grocery, or whatever the existing prototype of the corner grocery has been, while man has roamed the world, 'killing much and robbing more,' looting at his will the treasures of a church, a city or an empire. He soon discovered that the earth and its fullness were his for the taking; thus he cultivated his taste for art. He also discovered that, since pillaging was easy, giving was delightful. History proves my contention. Look at the Medicis. The love of beautiful things, and the passion for their acquisition, were an inheritance of their blood, but only along the male line. The Medici women preferred the lighter diversions of intrigue, poisoning and politics.

"Why, the voice of woman, the query of the Eternal Feminine, is: 'What can I give to thee, O liberal and princely giver?' And she makes her own answer from the depths of her own heart:

"Can it be right to give what I can give?  
To let thee sit beneath the fall of tears  
As salt as mine?"

"A man may give to the woman he loves anything from a 'kingdom to rose leaves'; but her choice of what to give him is more restricted. Emerson recognized that when he urged the farmer

to give his corn, the shepherd his lamb, the poet his poem, etc. But what was left for woman to give? 'The girl, a handkerchief of her own sewing'—or," added Egeria, mischievously, "a *mouchoir* or necktie case, heavily scented."

An irritated frown gathered on the Financier's brow. "If my friend has thought of me, it is sufficient. It makes little difference what outward symbol the thought takes," he said, reprovingly.

"Oh, but it does!" insisted Egeria. "The symbol should show the right kind of a thought. Suppose you send me a sheaf of rare orchids of a fabulous price. There is the expression of a thought; but I view it as a perfunctory recognition of a social obligation. You have forgotten my often-expressed love for golden-hearted, pale roses. You have given me nothing; rather have you taken something from me. I am chilled; I discover suddenly that we are strangers. But look at the matter from another point of view. You send me as a gift some horror. What difference if it is hideously ugly and strikingly inappropriate? It is a spontaneous expression of your good will and your thought of me. Shall I banish it? Never, although it is a note of discord, disturbing the harmony of my surroundings. It becomes, instead, a cherished possession."

"After all," murmured the Financier, "the best gifts—I had almost said 'the only gifts'—are those which come like love and Dian's kiss, unasked, unsought. Into their bestowal no questions of barter ever enter. They cannot be purchased; they must be given."

"It is a delightful thought, although it must occasionally be a mournful one to you, Financier, that there are things which no money can buy."

"I wonder if you know what they are?" he asked.

"Some of them. Last night I went to a gorgeous dinner. The lights and the flowers were beautiful, the food delicious, and the faces of the people about the board were as empty and vapid and unimaginative as their lives



or their conversation. Suddenly, above the music of the stringed instruments, I heard the wild, sweet notes of the 'bird of time.' Did you ever hear it, Financier?"

The Financier nodded his head.

"Well, he called me more and more insistently, until at last I slipped away, unnoticed, out into the garden. The soft, mysterious snow was changing the face of the world, and the wind, not cold nor piercing, but balmy and sweet with strange fragrances, wooed me on and on. At last I stood in a great white waste as remote as the heart of a limitless desert, although it was only a walled garden, and for a moment—or was it centuries?—I seemed to stand face to face with the soul of things. I felt as if I had come to the wilderness, come as must every one who lives, in the endeavor to discover the real things

—the things that all your money cannot buy, Financier!"

"What did you find they were?" he asked, and his voice was very low.

"Love and laughter, sacrifice and sympathy, work and dreams!"

"May I give you 'a kingdom and rose leaves' for a Christmas remembrance, Egeria? You know you said—"

"Send something between them, O liberal and princely giver; a book, a flower, a basket of sweets."

"And will you not give me something that money cannot buy?"

"A handkerchief of my own sewing?" she asked. "Money would never buy that; no one would purchase it. I will give you—a perfumed sachet case."

"A murrain on you, Egeria!" he dropped her hands.

"Merry Christmas, Financier!"



## RESPIRE

ALL out of tune—all wildly out of tune!  
 And yet, O master, lay me by a 'while;  
 Tighten again not yet the tensed strings,  
 Too taut to quiver, lest they snap in twain  
 And I perforce be mute forevermore.  
 Bend o'er me once thine enigmatic smile,  
 Draw once thy hand along the fingerboard,  
 And grant me respite in the dusk an hour  
 To grow accustomed to the straining pitch—  
 Then key me to thy thought, nor heed the pain.  
 O Life, O Great Composer, not in vain  
 Thy patient handling and thy master-touch!  
 Something I catch behind confusion's din,  
 Something I guess at, of thy symphony;  
 Not least of all thy instruments I thrill  
 To voice the music dripping from thy great  
 Masterful fingers. Yet a little while  
 And thy wise patience shall its end attain—  
 These jangling tones shall all be reconciled,  
 Joy with despair, and grief with gladness, blend,  
 Till death and birth the perfect octave strike;  
 Then break the strings—I shall be satisfied!

ALLAN MUNIER.

# THE BALANCE OF DESTINY

BY EDITH MACVANE

**T**HE Baronne d'Etretat glanced at her watch with an expression as near to annoyance as her well-trained features could assume. "I have now," she said, "been kept waiting exactly twenty minutes after the time appointed for the fitting of my new costume. If I did not need it absolutely to wear this afternoon, at the private opening of the Salon d'Automobile, I would refuse to wait another moment. It is really too outrageous of Clément!"

"My dear," replied her godmother, "you must acknowledge, at least, that Clément gives a good excuse to-day—a difficulty with some of her working girls."

"I cannot see," replied the *baronne*, coldly, "why the affairs of such persons should be brought to my notice at all, still less why they should be allowed to interfere with my convenience. What concern have I with these *ouvrières* of Clément's, except to wear my dress when they have finished it?—and to devote them all to the guillotine when they keep me waiting as they do to-day!"

The old *comtesse* flung up her hands with a laugh—carefully uttered, so as not to crack the rosy calcimining of her face. "Little tyrant!" she cried. "Then go out to the workroom, tell them your opinion of them—threaten them; force them to give up the dress!"

The *baronne* smiled faintly in reply. "I, godmamma? I speak to such creatures? I make a scene before all the world?"

"Ah, *mon Dieu*!" replied her godmother, "it is true, you are a fitting descendant of the Old Régime. It is not for nothing, indeed, that you are known as the haughtiest woman in Paris!"

"Nonsense, godmamma!" but, nevertheless, this compliment touched the younger woman with a subtle ecstasy which it was against her code to show outwardly, but which thrilled her from hair to heel. The old *comtesse* went on, airily:

"That being the case, my Odette, I am often struck with surprise to see you no less impassioned in your concern for your toilet than we other poor, weak women, who listen to our lovers every day;" and with a shaking finger she touched the spot where beneath lace and embroidery her heart was still feebly beating. The *baronne* shook her head with a smile as she replied:

"But if one has no lovers to listen to, godmamma!"

"No lovers! Listen to the child! My dear, I own to you that at times I am jealous of you; even I! You with all the gilded youth of Paris sighing for your lily skin and your brown eyes—and, above all, this latest conquest of yours, the Marquis de Flâneur, is it not so?"

The *baronne* yawned slightly as she examined samples of chiffon. "Really, godmamma, I do not know!"

"She doesn't know," fumed the old *comtesse*; "and there he is at her feet, as all the world knows! He, the most illustrious name in France; rich like an American and handsome like a Greek—and she will not look at him! Will you tell me, then, why you take so many pains to make yourself beautiful with these ravishing toilets of yours, if you mean never to enjoy the fruits of your successes?"

The *baronne* laughed. "Godmamma," she replied, "I find, then, that my successes, like my virtue—which so annoys you—are their own reward. And for the rest, if I have no coquetry in my blood, I have at least a full sense of my obligations. For in my code, as you

know, it is the duty of all those of ancient race to impress this superiority upon the common people by the outward tokens which their sordid senses are able to appreciate."

The *comtesse* rose to her feet with a giddy little scream. "*Mon Dieu*, child, what splendid language and what noble sentiments—and at the last of it, you get the clothes, too! But now, *chérie*, I must leave you. I have promised to take lunch with your little cousin, Madame de Mounay—and here it is a quarter past the hour. I shall see you this afternoon." She stooped and kissed her goddaughter's cheek. "So now, my cabbage—*au revoir*!"

This conversation took place at Paquin's, in the little white salon reserved for the most illustrious patrons. Luckily for the *baronne's* peace of mind and intentions toward the working classes, the door had hardly closed behind the mincing fingers of her godmother before the curtains at the other end of the room were pulled aside and Madame Clément entered—fat, breathless and apologetic.

"A thousand pardons, madame the *baronne*," she cried, "but, you see, these little difficulties, they will occur! And now, madame, as you see, the costume is ready—all finished for madame to try on and then drive it home with her in her carriage. Behold our triumph!" And she waved a satisfied hand toward the two sallow seamstresses who stood behind her, appearing no more than flower stands half hidden beneath festoons of billowing violet.

"Behold!" cried Madame Clément, with enthusiasm. "The gown, shirred in three shades, as madame desired, and incrustured with *motifs* of Venetian point. The hat, tilted as madame designed; and the plumes dyed to match the flowers." As she spoke, she touched the articles enumerated with reverent eyes and a watering mouth, as one might handle a game *fâté* blessed by the Pope of Rome. "The boa, madame, of chiffon ruffles and wreaths of violets—the gloves, the shoes! Ah, the world will be talking of madame to-morrow! And for the next three months not a shop

in Paris will be able to keep any violet stuffs in stock for a day!"

The *baronne* approached and examined the articles held up for her inspection; at their perfection, even her serene and haughty features relaxed for a moment in a smile of pleasure. Madame Clément heaved a sigh of relief at the evident satisfaction of this exacting and important customer.

"There is, besides, the carriage wrap that madame the *baronne* commanded last week," she observed, with a sudden thought; "the cloak of ermine and guipure—all completed but the loops; madame desires to see that also?"

"It is not worth while to-day," returned the *baronne*, with indifference; "but this toilet, which I must wear this afternoon——"

"Madame the *baronne* will try it on, yes, just to make sure that every little detail is as it should be?" inquired the dressmaker, with anxious deference.

The *baronne* half rose from her seat, then fell back with a languid droop of her slim figure. "Oh, Madame Clément, but the notion is too fatiguing! It is absolutely necessary that I save myself for this afternoon. And yet"—she mused a moment—"it is absolutely necessary that the toilet be faultless. Hold, madame! Can you not have one of your workwomen brought here, of the same height and figure as I, to try the costume on in my place, and let me survey the effect?"

Madame Clément paused to consider the proposition. One of the pale-faced *ouvrières* leaned toward her with a cough and a whispered suggestion. "Ah," pondered madame, "Berthe—yes, it is true, there is perhaps a slight resemblance. At all events, Berthe is the nearest that we can supply. Go, Jeanne, send Berthe to me."

In a few moments a pretty, sullen-faced girl with red hair and eyes cast down came quietly into the little salon. Silent and with yielding limbs, like a plastic image, she stood to be draped in the filmy splendor of the beautiful *baronne*; while the latter, leaning back in her chair, watched the robing of her substitute with eyes in which not so

much as a shade of disdain recognized their common humanity.

"Hold!" cried the dressmaker, in an ecstasy. "It is perfect, it is ravishing! Here, Berthe, turn this way; now that. Now revolve before madame the *baronne*." Like a wax figure in a hairdresser's shop, the girl spun slowly about under the calm survey of the gold eyeglass fixed upon her.

"It is not bad, madame," at length the judgment was pronounced; and at this praise, which from a modern representative of the Old Régime was enthusiasm indeed, Madame Clément bridled with gratification.

"But that line of shirring in the skirt, madame!" The *baronne* raised her hand in sudden criticism. "Hold, there on the right. Will you ask the young woman to turn again, please?" At this omission of her personality, the model's face flared a sudden deep red; but at the word of order from her employer she revolved in obedience. "Yes, that line of shirring on the right," repeated the *baronne*, calmly; "I find that the fullness bunches over the hip. Will you see that it is altered, please?"

The dressmaker pounced upon the defect indicated. "Yes, madame the *baronne*. It is the fault of these stupid *ouvrières*, the sacred monkeys! Hold, a pin here, a pin there. It shall be ready by this afternoon, I engage my honor to madame. And now the hat, the boa. Wait, then, madame, we will try the whole effect." As she spoke, the modiste adjusted the sweeping plumed hat upon the head of the silent girl, and arranged over her shoulders the ruff of pleated chiffon, with its adornment of violets. "Ah, sacred name of a name!" she cried, clasping her hands. "Madame, I beseech you, regard it well. Is it not perfection?"

Languidly the *baronne* rose to her feet, as the girl turned around like a lowering piece of mechanism in the middle of the floor. "Not bad," repeated the *baronne*, in her former tone of calm approval; then, with an inflection of something like surprise, she raised her hand in a sudden gesture.

"But look, Madame Clément;" and

she pointed at the wide cheval glass which lined one side of the little apartment, where, reflected side by side, stood the Baronne d'Etretat and the little seamstress in her borrowed magnificence. "Look, Madame Clément, and look well again! If it were not that I have my cardcase with me, would you dare say which was I?"

The women stood silent, gazing at the two reflected images of the same slender figure, the same curling red hair and the same mahogany eyes. "You remark it, also, madame?" inquired the *baronne*.

Madame Clément regained her composure with a bustle of contempt. "Nonsense!" she cried. "To be sure, there are some points that are not unlike, and the general effect is striking, now that Berthe wears the toilet of madame. But that an *ouvrière* should dare to resemble the Baronne d'Etretat—bah, I mock myself not badly of the notion!"

The *baronne* dismissed the subject with a wave of her hand as she proceeded to an examination of the costume in detail; while the subject of the discussion, standing isolated in the midst, raised for an instant blissful eyes to the face of the celebrated beauty before her, then to her own mirrored reflection on the wall. Beyond doubt, in spite of the words of the modiste, it was plain that the observation of the *baronne* had been founded on fact. After all, life held some compensations for its grinding inequalities.

"But, Madame Clément," cried the *baronne*, suddenly, "the muff, the violet muff to match the boa—I have not yet seen that."

The dressmaker started, her face turning pale. "Go, Jeanne," she said, with simulated self-confidence, to one of the assistants beside her; "go and ask Yanetta if she has yet completed the muff of madame the *baronne*." And with a fury of zeal she applied herself to the imperfection in the skirt until the curtain opened again and the messenger reappeared. Her thin face was lit with joy which is the portion of the irresponsible bearer of bad news.

"I am sorry, m'dame," she announced, demurely, "but Mam'selle Yanetta says she received no order for a violet muff such as m'dame describes."

The face of the *patronne* went livid. "Animal!" she hissed; then, regaining her composure: "Send Yanetta to me." She turned to the *baronne* in explanation. "Our specialist, the first, the *only*, builder of muffs in the capital who is worthy of the name. But, alas! a Basque, an original, a socialist—what would you?—who knows her own mind and, alas! her own value. I own it to you, I am powerless before her."

The portières swung back, and a little, black-faced, stunted woman stood before them, her eyes glittering as sharp and bright as the needle in her hand. The model's sulky face relaxed to a grin amid the temporary gorgeousness of her apparel, and the two sallow attendants fluttered in pleased anticipation.

"You sent for me, m'dame?"

In a whirl of words the modiste turned toward the delinquent. "The muff of madame the *baronne*—why is it not ready? The order was not given? Ah, listen to her, then, this Yanetta! Of a deafness to shame a dead rabbit; of a stupidity to cut with a knife! Madame, for my soul's intercession, I beseech your pardon for this blunder! The muff shall be finished, I pledge my honor to you, by half-past three this afternoon."

The culprit stood her ground in unruffled independence, until her arraignment was complete. "I may go now, m'dame?" she asked, moving toward the door.

"One moment, imbecile! Here is the chiffon—the violets. Remember, the muff is to be done by half-past three."

The bright black eyes snapped defiance at the group. "M'dame, it is impossible. By half-past four I must have completed the muff of Madame Isaacsohn, of Chicago. The time is short. I am dismissed, m'dame?" And her lips snapped together in a decision that left no room for hope.

As the astute specialist had foreseen, the name of the customer mentioned acted like a talisman upon the angry determination of the *patronne*. And yet how was it possible to disappoint the waiting *baronne*? Madame Clément wiped fine beads of anguish from her brow as her disappointed client turned and spoke with freezing determination.

"Madame Clément, as you doubtless understand for yourself, the costume without the muff does not exist. Without the proper accessories to my toilet, I cannot go to the Salon d'Automobile this afternoon, and the incomplete costume, of course, remains on your hands."

"Animal!" cried Madame Clément, turning to her specialist in desperation. "I command you to make the muff!"

"I have only one pair of hands, *voilà*! I am dismissed, madame?"

The head of the establishment stood silent in ineffectual desperation. The *baronne* turned with an icy swish of her skirts.

"It is settled, then. The costume remains where it is—very appropriate, my faith!—and I remain at home. Good-day, Madame Clément!"

Suddenly her indignant progress toward the door was checked by a new voice, from the lay figure beneath the violet hat. The *baronne* started in undisguised amazement, as though the toilet itself, suddenly endowed with life, had looked up and spoken to her.

"Madame! Madame Clément! With the kind permission of madame the *baronne*, I will make the muff."

These words were spoken in a tone deep and vibrant, in which a certain roughness of accent was made almost alluring by a hundred suggested possibilities of expression. Madame Clément laid her hand upon her heart with a gasp of incredulous relief. The *baronne* turned to the speaker, and their eyes met.

"You will make my muff? Then, you, too, are a specialist?"

"I am not a specialist, m'dame the *baronne*; but I have watched Mam'selle

Yanetta at work, and what she has done I can do." At this intrepid self-confidence, the *patronne* fanned herself with the fashion magazine in her hand, and the defeated muff specialist glared in contemptuous unbelief.

"You, Berthe?" cried Madame Clément. "You will undertake this muff? The ruffles, the cascade, the rosettes—the necessary combination of *chic* and of high art?"

In all the glory of suddenly gained importance, the young seamstress threw up her head with its violet adornments, till in pride as well as in outline her lineaments reflected faithfully those of the lady before her.

"Madame," she said, "I undertake it. By half-past three it shall be ready."

With a snort of scornful fury the specialist turned to her chief. "I leave you to your new specialist! I am dismissed, madame?" And with noises of rage she flounced from the room, while Madame Clément turned to her impatient client.

"Madame the *baronne*," she said, "with your permission, all shall be as this ambitious young person desires. By three o'clock the alteration in the gown shall be completed, the muff shall be achieved. And *crac!* we put a messenger into a *fiacre*, to take everything to madame in safety, by half-past three precisely!"

With a slight inclination of the head, the *baronne* consented to this arrangement.

"Till half-past three; remember, it must be no later."

"Till half-past three, m'dame the *baronne*."

## II.

Upon the long worktable in the inner room of Madame Clément's establishment were piled various colored stuffs in all the gorgeous confusion of a sunset; ringed about by the white faces of the little, black-clad *ouvrières*, swaying and chattering above their busily twitching hands. Occasionally the door opened and the *patronne* sailed in, hawk-eyed and majestic; instantly

the hum of youthful voices fell and ceased, and each needle glistened furiously at attention. Then followed directions, criticisms—reproof, perhaps, followed by protestations from the delinquent, and a gush of nervous tears. Then an influx of clients would draw madame away from her labors of supervision, and the door swinging to behind her left the young girls to the monotonous tranquillity of their toil.

But there was one pair of eyes that neither gossip, jeers nor the opportunity of an instant's idleness could withdraw from their straining devotions over a rapidly developing knot of purple chiffon and violets. "Hold, but our Berthe is of a virtue!" giggled Jeanne, as she bent over her work with a cough. "Next Sunday," cried her neighbor—"next Sunday you shall see this little Berthe admitted to the sacrament without confession—like this!" and with a nervous titter at her own daring wit, she hastily swallowed the last fragments of a surreptitious sandwich of brown sugar and soldier's bread, licked her fingers clean, and returned to the shirings upon the *baronne's* skirt.

Yanetta lifted up her voice from the head of the table, where, by virtue of seniority and superior skill, she sat and labored in frowning state.

"If there is anything left alive of her on Sunday, our new artist and muff specialist," she observed; "for at present it appears she wrings her lifeblood in order to have this creation complete by three o'clock. And what for? To please a *baronne*! Bah, what *snobisme*!"

Berthe pinched her lips in scornful silence, while a little creature at her side, pulling her needle laboriously through the heavy silk loops of a lace and ermine cloak, lifted up a hoarse voice in answer. "Ah, yes, Mam'selle Yanetta! We are all snobs, working here—that sees itself well! And yet, my chicken, one must live."

"Live!" cried the Basque, with a flash of her sunken black eyes. "And you call this living? Grinding out our fingers and our hearts around this sacred pig of an old table, in order to earn



a few sous to keep us alive for another day—another day of what?"

"Of the table, my brave," giggled the little loopmaker.

"Yes, and lucky enough to be sitting around it!" observed Jeanne, with plaintive frankness. "When one comes seeking work, and is told, 'There is no room for you, the table is full'—then the streets look very empty when one turns away from the door, my faith!"

"Yes, the streets where madame the *baronne* and this madame from Chicago drive in their fur redingotes, with their chauffeurs beside them! Why not us, I ask you, as well as they?"

Berthe glanced up for an instant, with an oblique flash of her restless brown eyes. Yanetta caught the look and laughed. "Yes, my little one, we can go to the moon with that question—*hein?* But at least one thing is certain, here we all are in the mud together, and we are imbeciles to fling any of it at each other. We get enough of that from our betters—*hein?* Hold, little idiot, that ruffle should twist inward—so—and then be picked out in order to form a nest for the violets. There! After all, your work is not so bad!"

At this sudden relenting on her part of the famous specialist, the girls nudged each other, and Berthe's sullen silence relaxed for an instant into gratitude. "Thank you, mam'selle!" Suddenly the door opened and the dignified *patronne* entered with an anxious step. Instantly all conversation ceased, and the needles marched together feverishly.

"Berthe," cried Madame Clément, hastily, "it is already a quarter before three. Is the muff ready?"

Every head turned toward Berthe, as the sewing silk twitched and broke in her shaking hand. She bent furiously over her work. "In one moment, m'dame." The *patronne* bent an impatient and critical eye upon the purple heap between the girl's hands, when suddenly the telephone bell in the corner tinkled its sharp summons. Madame Clément moved in leisurely state to the machine. "Madame the *baronne*? Yes, tell madame that all is ready, the

messenger is starting even now; by half-past three the toilet will be with her. My honor is pledged. Yes, half-past three."

With a snap the *patronne* hung up the receiver and turned to the girl whose toil had suddenly identified itself with the existence of the very moment itself, and in whose straining hands the frivolous violet trifle intensified itself into the very center point of the universe. "It shall be done, m'dame!"

"Come, Jeanne!" cried Madame Clément, anxiously. "The gown is complete, at all events. Come with me, make everything ready in the boxes. Then we call a *fiacre*, and when the muff is ready—then *zut!*"

"One more rosette, m'dame!" cried Yanetta, with sardonic encouragement, as Berthe pounced with mute fury upon the last filmy strips. The *patronne* bustled out with her assistant, and the room returned to its normal restive application. In a few moments, as it seemed to the anxious worker, the cheap Swiss clock in the corner tinkled the stroke of three, and almost on the instant the telephone rang again. The girl nearest the corner sprang in eager relief to answer the call.

"Madame the *baronne*? Yes, madame. At half-past, precisely, without fail!" She turned from the corner with a giggle of excitement. "Make haste there, my little Berthe!" "Make haste, my little soldier!" echoed the loopmaker, and she picked up the last spray of violets and held it ready to Berthe's convulsively moving hand. "*Mon Dieu*," she observed, "but she has made a success, this Berthe! And beyond a doubt, her future is made!"

The door swung open and Madame Clément whirled in with breathless cries. "Are you finished, Berthe? Past three, and a half-hour's drive to be done in twenty minutes, or our reputation is lost forever. Name of a name, my girl, make haste, make haste! The boxes are packed, the cab is at the door."

In a swirl of violet stems and purple snippings, Berthe sprang to her feet, tottering for a moment upon her stiff-

ened limbs. In unspoken triumph she held out to the *patronne* and to the assembled room the fruit of her feverish labor—a mere decorative trifle, dainty as a flower, harmonious as a Sistine mosaic.

"*Sapristi*, she has made a success, this little one!" observed the Basque, with something like jealousy in her tones. "A thousand congratulations, my Berthe!" cried Jeanne, in an outburst of generous enthusiasm; and the table echoed her praise in the disheartened tones of those hopelessly distanced in the race for success. For the fleeting passage of a moment, the silent girl stood flushed and giddy on the heights of achievement, the center of her little world, the victor over time and material forces as triumphantly as Napoleon at Austerlitz.

"Not bad, my little one!" pronounced the *patronne*, with genial dignity; then breathlessly: "Come, here is the box, the tissue paper. There, carefully! Now, Berthe, your hat, your jacket—come, the cab waits for you." With her hat half pinned to her head, her arms still struggling in the sleeves of her shabby gray jacket, Berthe was hastened and thrust downstairs, pushed along by the box in the hand of the *patronne* herself—circumstances unheard of, unparalleled! "A quarter past three!" cried madame, anxiously. "Here, Berthe, take this last box upon your knee—so! Here, pile the others securely about you. And now"—to the cabman—"for the love of God, speed your horse, stomach-to-the-ground, across the city!"

As in obedience to the singing whip the turnout started with a rattle down the Avenue de l'Opéra, the solitary passenger sat erect, motionless, with hands tightly clasping the box upon her lap. Before the magnificence which from behind crystal windows stared at her on both sides of the street, her achievement no longer seemed anything remarkable. She had strained nerves and vital forces to the breaking point, and for what? A muff of gauze, whose very existence was a contradiction—a thing utterly perishable and not even useful! Her

head ached, her limbs twitched painfully; for the moment she was seized with the weariest of all disgusts—that of the creator who sees that his production is, after all, not worth the toil and pain with which he has wrought it. Which of all these elegant ladies, these dashing gentlemen, that filled the splendid street about her, would look at her with more respect on account of this trifle which for a moment had dazzled her eyes as success? After all, it was nothing, and she was nothing—a little working girl in a shabby hat and mended gloves, driving like a dummy in a cheap cab that was hired not even for her, but for the boxes piled all around her. A scarlet automobile dashed by, with a glittering chauffeur and two ladies in cream-colored furs and long, floating veils. Tears of rage and self-pity came scalding into the eyes of the young girl regarding them. The words of the fierce Yanetta knocked with sudden fury upon the gateway of her brain: "Why not we, I ask you, as well as they?"

With a sudden jerk the coachman brought his horse up standing at the corner, and turned back in sudden inquiry to his passenger. "*Hé*, say there, my little one! Was she crazy, that old woman? She says to me: 'Drive quickly across the city,' but, name of a cat! she is in such a hurry, she does not tell me where to drive. The address, my beauty?"

Berthe bent forward, leaning up toward him. "Hôtel d'Étretat, Rue de Lille," she said, while a sudden passion of envy and discontent tore at her heart. An automobile drawing up at the curb beside them vomited a sudden screech and grunt; the cab horse recoiled in disgust, and the driver of Berthe threw himself upon the reins. A lady stepped from the car—high-boned, withered, exquisitely dressed; her eye fell upon Berthe, sitting among her pasteboard boxes behind the capering horse, as upon a puppet hardly real enough to displace the atmosphere; a look without interest, without recognition, without as much as scorn; such a look, in short, as from the eyes of the *baronne* had

that morning tingled Berthe's blood into rebellion. But now this renewed and casual proof of her own insignificance inflamed rebellion into the activity of definite revolt, with a new idea that burned up suddenly in her brain. She sat somber, breathless, all life suspended in her body by the fury of a sudden determination.

The cabman controlled his horse and leaned down again from his perch. "The address—I did not hear it, mam'selle?" he repeated, impatiently. Berthe raised two eyes, fixed and enigmatic, to his face. "The address?" she said. "No. 104 Rue Pigale"—which was, indeed, the steep and winding street behind the Madeleine, where in a dingy little attic room Berthe made the only home she knew.

The coachman burst out laughing. "Rue Pigale, yes, that is likely, my bird! All these fine clothes to Rue Pigale! Yes, that's a fine story, name of a pig!" and he leered incredulously at her. Berthe's solemn eyes, relaxing in sudden indignation, flashed sparks of fury at him.

"Animal!" she cried. "I tell you, these clothes are for a lady from Chicago. It is there in the Rue Pigale that I am to meet her maid—at half-past three, remember that! So drive quickly, or I am late at the rendezvous. Hurry, I tell you!"

With a grunt testifying to his total indifference to the whole affair, the coachman turned his rattling vehicle and took his course back toward the Madeleine. Swiftly, like a seaman stranded in a fragment of flying wreckage, the young girl behind him weighed chances, made plans, steeled her fluttering nerves to uphold her final resolutions. As the mind of a dying man reverts to details of bread and cheese, she took out her thin-cheeked purse, opened it and mechanically counted her little stock of money. Her week's rent was due, but what at this instant was the importance of such a trifle as that? Fifteen francs and a few centimes. Yes, it was enough; for the business in hand she could need no more.

## III.

"Here we are at the palace, my *bourgeoise*!" cried the coachman, turning to her with eyes of patronizing familiarity, from which Berthe winced haughtily. With a gesture of carefully assumed majesty she held out to him the amount of his fare, with drink-money reduced to as low a margin as she dared. Then, with arms loaded with boxes, she stumbled up flight after flight of narrow stairways, to a dark little room facing upon chimney pots and cut in two by the sloping roof that pressed down its shabby plaster upon her head. Her pulses were beating like the dynamos of a power house, her mind plunged through the necessary details before her with an exalted keenness.

"A cab," she murmured, suddenly, to herself. "How could I forget? A cab I must have, of course." For one instant she hesitated; then, leaning from her window, she sought through the crowd of gamins playing on the street below her. Then, singling one out with her eye, "Jacquot!" she called, shrilly. "Jacquot!"

A dirty little face was upturned toward her. "*Hein*, Mam'selle Berthe?"

"Come here, my brave! I have something for you."

Withdrawing her head, she threw herself with passion upon the boxes, pulling from their tissue paper the delicate garments which had been so reverently packed only an hour before. A vision crossed her mind of the *baronne*, at this present moment—waiting, raging, telephoning. Without her new costume, as the lady had declared this morning, it would be impossible for her to attend the gorgeous function at the Salon d'Automobile. Ah, the *Baronne d'Etretat*, for once, would have to stay at home! The notion tickled Berthe's fancy. She burst into loud laughter at the notion, rocking back and forth over the violet hat in the twilight of the dimly lighted chamber.

Scrambling footsteps approached her door, and a hand knocked sharply at the panel. "Come in, Jacquot!" The door was cautiously opened, and a small,

weasel-faced youngster, clad in a dingy blue blouse, came sliding into the room. At the sight of so much splendor strewn about, he paused, with sharp glances and a shrewd little smile. "Good-day, my rat! She sets up a shop, this Berthe! Bargains to-day, my little one?"

Berthe regarded him scornfully. "The things are mine, little imbecile," she replied, briefly.

Sudden enlightenment twisted the boy's face into a little knot of cunning. "Ah, yes, mam'selle has pretty eyes, beyond a doubt. The wonder is, as my mother has often said, that she has had to wait so long. So he has the dough, this one, has he?"

The girl clutched at the notion like a dying man at his breath. "The dough?" she cried, boastfully. "Ah, my brave, one of the millionaires of Paris! What do you think of that?"

The boy regarded her with sudden respect. "Then, to-morrow, I suppose, we never see you again in little Rue Pigale?"

To-morrow! She had not thought of that. But she struck the notion violently out of sight, like the head of an enemy peering from above a wall. "Not so, stupid!" she replied, briefly. "And now, my little one, I sent for you because I wanted you. I need a cab. Run down to the Madeleine, as quickly as you can fly, and bring me the smartest equipage you can find. Run, fly! You hear me?"

The boy stood his ground, as with a shrewd gesture he rubbed the palm of one hand with the thumb of the other. "Yes, my millionairess?" he observed, genially.

For a moment the girl hesitated; then, drawing a coin from her purse, she held it out to him. The boy seized it with contempt, and spat upon the ground. "Five centimes! You can call your own cab," he sneered.

Berthe's brown eyes lowered sudden thunder at him. "Five centimes—is it not enough for you? How long since you have seen as much at one time, little pauper—you and your old baked apple of a mother, together—*hein*? Go, do

as I bid you, or I will tell my millionaire, and he will have your stupid little tongue pulled out by the roots—he will have you pushed into the Seine some dark night, and then we will come to see you in the morgue, lying on your little marble slab—drip, drip, drip!" She paused for breath, glaring at him like a tigress; the boy was visibly shaken.

"Very well, just for a favor. *Fiacre* or *coupé*?"

"Coupé, my little pighead. And see that it is everything of the most *chic*! Brass, red morocco, cream broadcloth—you understand? And now—fly!"

As the clattering footsteps sank down the dark well of the staircase, Berthe turned in ecstasies to her task of dressing. All thought of the morrow, all fear of penalty, were driven from her mind by the mere sensuous delight of color and texture, as she drew on the violet silk stockings and high-heeled shoes, and hooked the delicate bodice over her machine-made chemise of coarse cotton cloth. She tilted her six-inch square of glass so as to obtain a view of her ankle peering from the billowy chiffon ruffles of the petticoat; then she turned her head this way and that, as she fixed the feathery violet hat upon her waves of rough red hair, with the long pins of gold and amethyst which Madame Clément had provided. Then the boa, the long, wrinkling gloves of purple suède, the muff on which she had labored so long. The new corporeal envelope seemed to penetrate to the very seats of her being, filling her with a delirious new individuality, like the fumes of brandy inhaled. The transient elevation, the inevitable crash, were no longer present to her consciousness. And when finally she swept downstairs to the cab summoned by the obedient Jacquot, she took her seat among the amazed and admiring glances of her neighbors, in regal oblivion to the fact that this exquisitely poignant moment could have any other consequence than its indefinite duration.

"To the Salon d'Automobile," she commanded the driver, with languid

decision. Then she leaned back against the cushions, watching greedily beneath her lashes for the glances she received from the throng hurrying past her in the street—eyes of respect, of envy, of admiration, how different from the notice bestowed upon her an hour ago!

She thrilled from head to foot with the warmth of a newly completed life, a suddenly equitable being. This, beyond a doubt, was her real self—the Berthe that had lain close folded, yet throbbing for freedom, inside the chrysalis of the little working girl; all through her untaught, buffeted childhood, her gray, laborious days of girlhood—a youth half starved, wild, rebellious. Yes, Yanetta was right, the good things of this world were too unevenly divided; it was no more than fair that when occasion offered she should snatch her share.

To her intoxicated senses it was neither a moment nor a lifetime, but a space at once fixed and fleeting, a flash of eternity, before the coupé drew up with a lordly clatter before the canopied and gilded entrance of the great exhibition to which she was bound. With an elaborate carelessness of her ruffles, such as she had seen great ladies use, she stepped from her coupé and paid her cabman, with an added gratuity which made him stare.

A little hand touched her elbow. Looking down, she beheld a childish face, pinched and keen, looking at her eagerly from over a tray of flowers. "Violets, m'dame? Violets?" With a sudden inspiration, Berthe tore open her purse again—the same little shabby affair from which she had so grudgingly paid the driver of the *fiacre*, sole relic of her real self which still clung to her. There was still ten francs and a few centimes left within. She looked down at the little flower vender. "Those bunches—how much?"

"Five francs, m'dame."

"I will take two—yes, with the violet tinfoil. Yes, I will wear them." With a gesture which she tried to make superb, Berthe emptied the contents of the purse into the thin little grimy hand

held up to her, tossed the purse itself into the gutter, and, with the violets clasped against her muff, walked slowly up the carpeted steps under the canopy. From the corner of her eye she saw the little flower merchant pounce eagerly upon the cast-off portemonnaie; and with a momentary contraction of the heart she realized that she was now penniless, nameless; floating without foundation over the surface of the world, the mere vanishing figment of a dream.

At the far end of the long Byzantine foyer a gorgeous official suddenly barred her progress with a low bow. "Your card, madame?" Berthe stopped short, dumb and quivering. With a still more deferential bow, the attendant repeated his inquiry. Berthe tried to answer, but her voice stuck in her throat; for the first time in her life she found herself at a loss under attack. For her only weapons of defense were the violent pleasantries with which, an hour ago, she had overcome the opposition of the little Jacquot; and such methods, she recognized in a sudden swooning helplessness, were altogether useless to her now. Suddenly she was brought back to consciousness by the hiss of a new voice, severe yet half alarmed:

"Animal! Do you not see whom you are questioning? The Baronne d'Etretat herself!" And with reverential salutes the silk rope was raised to admit her, while a second official murmured deferential apologies in her ear.

Almost simultaneously with the falling of the title upon her ear, Berthe swept forward into the inner vestibule, where from a hundred mirrors her image danced and swayed before her. Yes, the Baronne d'Etretat! That marvelous physical resemblance, which under the overwhelming excitement of her toilet had been almost forgotten, was still as close, as convincing, as when in the morning it had drawn an exclamation from the baronne herself. Berthe stood smiling before her reflection, pinning the violets into her corsage and drawing long breaths of relief. Yes, she was no longer nameless,

cut off from all those about her, a mere phantasm of fine clothes and violets; for the moment, at least, she was the *Baronne d'Etretat*.

Slowly she moved to the palm-bow-ered entrance that led to the wide inner hall. The orchestra was playing softly "*Sourire d'Avril*," there was a hum of voices in the air, and a smell of gasoline, machine oil and the perfume of flowers. Everywhere were the glittering brass of automobiles, the uniforms of busy chauffeurs, the ravishing toilets of ladies whom she had seen driving in the Bois, or helped to fit at Madame Clément's. Two or three looked up and bowed to her; others rushed forward with outstretched hands. Berthe raised her muff to her lips, and looked over it with a dizzy delight, an intoxicated resolve to conquer this moment of opportunity that had at last come to her.

Like Columbine, she had passed the barriers, but she had come to the flying rings!

#### IV.

The violet costume was a success! There was no doubt about that, at least. "Look, then, is she not ravishing?" "Madame, all my compliments!" "Odette, my cabbage, but you are furiously beautiful to-day! I give you my word, you make the rest of us appear like little *ouvrières*!"

Before the voice of this undivided homage, Berthe's head swam in an intoxicating bliss, which, though unused to self-analysis, she told herself dimly was the fullness of life. With head held high and eyes shining, she moved slowly about the hall, surrounded by her train of admirers, followed by the delighted eyes and acclamation of the aristocratic throng. But the apex of success, though entrancing to the imagination, produces before long a reaction of giddiness, of exhausted nerves. Moreover, she was harassed by uncertainty as to the tones of her voice, which, in spite of few words and those only half spoken, sounded harsh and untutored in her own ears. So on the sudden pressing back of the company,

in order to make way for the exhibition of a new "circus" car from America, the mock *baronne* seized the opportunity to retire into momentary seclusion in the cloistered alley formed by the rows of glistening machines.

Slowly she paraded down the deserted aisle, in full enjoyment of the relaxation which comes of play-acting to oneself, instead of before all the world; drinking in with greedy delight the *frou-frou* of her silken skirts, the odor of her violets. A machine of unpainted metal, the tonneau walled with burnished brass, struck back her own image sharply to her eyes. Yes, it was enchanting, the picture that she beheld! A lady white-skinned, slim, exquisite; one who had by actual presence proved her rightful place in this world of beauty and enchantment, yet doomed to an endless to-morrow of worktable and attic room. Suddenly her heart contracted with a shock of clamorous recollection; no, even from that meager and precarious existence she was now, by her own act, disbarred! To-morrow? For a moment her stomach stirred, and her limbs turned to water beneath her. She stood rigid, her eyes fast joined to those of the violet lady staring back at her from the burnished metal mirror of the automobile.

Suddenly a voice breathed low in her ear; she shrank away with a quivering start of surprise. "Ah, madame, I commend your taste. The picture exhibited here is indeed more entrancing than any in the Salon this year!"

With a strong effort at self-control, she turned to meet two dark eyes, languid yet whimsical, looking down into hers from a face familiar to her, as to all Paris, from a thousand reproductions in the weekly journals, from parade at the races, at the opera, at every resort of sport and of fashion. The leader of all cotillions, the prize whip of the Jockey Club, author of a sensational book of daring love lyrics, the hero of uncounted adventures in the boudoir and on the field of honor—to find this modern blending of Jove and the Chevalier Bayard looking into her eyes, what wonder that Berthe, after her long nerv-



ous strain, should start and turn pale? The Marquis de Flâneur! Yes, was not his picture in halftone, published by *Femina*, fastened up with a black pin over her dingy dressing table, as over that of every girl in the establishment of Madame Clément?

"But, madame"—his voice sounded in her ear, soft, yet filled with deep inflections—"pardon my stupid joke, that I reproached you with coquetry. I see you are faint, the heat of this place is too much for you. Come, let me take you to the air."

With his arm under hers he supported her to one of the long, narrow windows overlooking the river; flinging open the casement, he stood looking down at her with solicitude, his hand still clasping her arm. "You will let me get you a glass of water, madame?"

"No, thank you, monsieur; I am better now."

The touch of his fingers stole through her glove with a magnetic warmth which shot like new life through her quivering nerves. A new sensation of delight, a delicious lassitude, seemed to envelop her; and half involuntarily she leaned upon the arm which so tenderly supported her. For a moment they stood together in silence, looking out at the river below them, lit by the sunset, winding down from the gilded dome of the Invalides to the distant gray towers of Notre Dame. "Ah, madame, I could wish that this sun might never set!"

At this delicately passionate whisper breathed softly in her ear, Berthe started and trembled, but did not remove the arm which lay so closely upon the marquis'. Nay, she leaned rather more confidently upon the warm prop which it afforded her. Never before, in all the bedraggled gayety which hard-fisted fate had measured out to her, had she known such a sensation as this! True, she was not without experience of love; but neither the medical student of the Boulier Ball nor the Bohemian artist of the Latin Quarter had descended upon her in this golden haze of mystery and delight!

She stood silent, listening to the low-

toned voice murmuring wistfully in her ear: "Ah, madame, I have always, as you know, been first among your adorers; but until to-day I have never recognized how imperative was the sentiment that you have inspired in me. Forgive my presumption, madame! But it seems as though in your beauty to-day I feel the presence of a new soul, of something soft and tender, of—may I say it?—of a heart, perhaps!"

Berthe thrilled with joy and exultation. Then this was not the *baronne's* lover who was so humbly pleading his suit to her, but hers, *hers*! In the yielding droop of her body the marquis seemed to read encouragement, for with sudden daring he clasped her hand.

"Madame, dare I hope? No, it is not possible!"

Berthe raised her eyes and looked at him. In those wide brown orbs, whose black lashes framed a world of hungry joy, of clamorous revolt, of undisciplined passion suddenly conscious of itself, the marquis stepped back in the gasping amazement of unlooked-for triumph. "Odette," he said, "this is your new self, that I adore with a love I never dreamed of until to-day! Odette, when did you change?"

With a fierce grasp at the happiness thus dangled before her eyes, she shot the blaze of her brown irids at him. "You know," she said, with a reckless oblivion to the necessities for subduing her voice—"you know that proverb that they have, those other English: '*Make hay while the sun shines*!' Take care, I may change back again as quickly!"

The marquis clasped both her hands in his, and lowered his face to hers in exultation. "Your very voice is changed, Odette!" he whispered. "No longer the liquid marble tones that I have known, but the vibrating tones of a living, breathing woman! Odette, I never loved you till to-day! Do not be afraid—I will give you no time to change again!"

For a moment he stood silent, pondering, both her hands still in his. Berthe leaned toward him; inquiring, breathless. Suddenly his face lighted

up. "I have it!" he said. "Every year at this time you go to Nice. What more natural than that you should start to-night? What more reasonable a coincidence than that I should take the first train in the morning? Odette! There in the sunshine of the Midi——"

Berthe shook off his hands from her own, in the pettishness of sudden despair. She, whose empty purse lay in the gutter—she take the night train for the south! "Very well," she said, brokenly; "if you can't take me with you——"

The fire of unexpected triumph blazed up in the marquis' eyes as he grasped her hand again in his own. "What?" he cried. "Then you will come with me? You will give up everything for me? My treasure, will a whole lifetime of devotion be sufficient to repay you for this magnificent sacrifice?"

Berthe suppressed the sudden grin which wrinkled her lips at these words, and threw up her head, regarding him with a smile tremulous in its self-abandon, yet filled with a determination almost tigerish. "You will be true to me?" she said. "You swear it?"

"To you, my Odette? To my new Odette, that I never knew until to-day?" He paused for a moment, pondering, then drew out his watch. "I give you no time to escape, my beautiful wild bird. In two hours the evening express leaves from the Gare de Lyons. That gives me just the time to fly home, to get money and make the necessary arrangements. But you, my angel? For you to come with me would be to risk all! Hold, you will wait for me here, will you not? And in a half hour I will return."

Berthe wrinkled her brows in trouble. "You will come back here for me, monsieur?"

His eyes reflected her perplexity. "To return here to the hall for you—that would be to invite notice which might ruin our plans altogether." He hesitated a moment. "No, my *chérie*, I will tell you the best idea. I will come back and wait at the entrance with my carriage, and send one of the

ushers in to you with a folded card as a signal—a folded card with one of your own violets pinned to it—if I had one!" He turned a pleading look upon her. With a gesture of reckless coquetry Berthe held up to him her lips and her violets together.

"Ah, my cherished one——"

"And now, make haste!" she said; then, as a sudden inspiration shot into her fertile mind: "But on your way, monsieur——"

He turned obediently. "Your commands, my angel?"

She smiled at him. "Will you have the goodness to stop at Paquin's, on the Avenue de l'Opéra, and ask for the wrap which has just been finished for the Baronne d'Étretat? A cloak of ermine and guipure—just the thing for a journey to the Midi."

"I will bring your cloak, my beautiful one. And now—wait for the card folded with the violet. *Au revoir*, my treasure!"

"*Au revoir*, monsieur!"

## V.

The half hour had gone by, and Berthe stood at the entrance of the Salon d'Automobile, inhaling the moist breath of her violets, and glancing hazily down the long foyer whence at any moment now the messenger of her bliss might come. The doorkeeper jumped up with respectful inquiry at her approach. "I may be of service to madame?" Berthe turned away haughtily. "I await monsieur," she replied, briefly, but with a shock of secret delight that sent the blood flying to her heart.

From the elegant throng continually passing by her, in and out, Berthe received her former tribute of admiring glances, smiles and eager greetings. But now she was no longer burdened by timidity and haunting dread of discovery; her destiny was secured, the ground was solid beneath her feet; so she held her head haughtily averted, repelling all friendly advances by the rigid sulkiness of her air. Suddenly her arm was seized from behind, and a shrill

voice clucked in her ear: "Aha, it is you!"

In a paralyzing reaction of terror, Berthe turned to find herself face to face with a gaunt, brilliantly tinted lady, whom the girl's horrified eyes recognized as the same meager fashion-plate whose exquisite toilet and unseeing gaze had, but two hours ago in the Avenue de l'Opéra, kindled her rebellious blood into the flame of revolt. She was recognized, she was lost; and the marquis had not come!

"Hé, my goddaughter, you are coy to-day. What mischief are you up to at last, tell me, then, little hypocrite!" With a sigh of relief, Berthe remembered that her very cause of grievance against this aristocratic lady had been the refusal of her eyes to recognize the existence of the little *ouvrière*. So how, indeed, could she recognize her now? She drew her breath freely, and with reckless alacrity played up to the cue offered her. She whispered in softly modulated confidence: "I await my husband, godmamma."

"Ah, my Odette, your virtue delights me! But come, let me see your costume, which I hear has made the sensation of the day. All the gentlemen are speechless with love, the ladies are slaughtered with envy! Your little cousin, Claire de Mounay, came to me even now with tears of rage in her eyes. Revolve, my angel! Yes, violets—at once pastoral and *chic*. I am resolved; I will go to Clément to-morrow morning and command a toilet in exact duplicate. My angel, when we appear together we shall dazzle every heart in Paris!"

Thus the old lady prattled on, while Berthe, in silent relief at the protection thus offered her, continued to search the foyer with her eyes. A half hour—yes, it was a half hour, and more! Like a thin stream of cold water, a sudden doubt trickled across the warmth of her self-confidence. After all, what reason had she to expect that the marquis would return at all? In this mysterious high world of fashion and amusement, how much importance would be attached to such a scene as

that recently enacted between her and her lordly vanished suitor? For all that she knew, such protestations and vows were of no more meaning than observations exchanged about the weather! There was a messenger approaching with something white in his hand. The folded card? No, a handkerchief, restored with a respectful bow to one of the gentlemen entering between the bars. A deadly sickness rocked the seats of her soul. As for the card, that would never come. She had played blindfold, in ignorance of the very rules of the game. If the marquis had intended to return, he would have been here long ago. Beyond doubt, he was now quietly smoking at his club, or taking his cup of *five-o'clock* from the fair hand of some aristocratic client of Madame Clément.

The hands of the great electric clock in the ceiling pointed to three-quarters of an hour past and gone. "Monsieur the baron is ungallant to keep you waiting so long," simpered the old lady; "but, then, what can one expect of a husband?"

A group of newcomers approached the entrance; surely among them would be the messenger of the folded card and violet! In an eager renewal of confidence, Berthe leaned toward the gate; the crowd swayed and parted, and her eyes clashed in full encounter with those of the Baronne d'Etretat.

The lady's beautiful face was pale and harassed in expression, with pinched nostrils and a contracted brow. In a momentary thrill, when triumph was blended with terror, Berthe noticed that she wore no hat, and that a long redingote of Russian sables completely covered her costume. But before the look of amazement, of understanding and of menace which the eyes of her victim shot at her, Berthe's sustaining audacity crumpled like a beetle in a furnace. As for the merits of the case, the mysterious questions of good and evil were outside the scope of her imagination, whether hereditary or acquired. She was not ashamed, because shame implies the recognition of a possible ideal, and ideals do not flourish in

the city mud from which capricious fate had extracted her being. But she was afraid, horribly afraid, like a thieving, half-starved mongrel cornered by an indignant butcher. With eyes frantically seeking for aid that did not come, she cowered back in a sheltering niche formed by a palm tree and an adjacent automobile.

She saw the *baronne* approaching her through the crowd. Outside the entrance, the foyer was empty, no messenger was coming to save her! Suddenly the throng was pushed to the side by a long string of passing chauffeurs, pulling among them a recalcitrant machine from which burst tiny menacing tongues of blue flame. "Make way for the salamander!" called a jocular voice; and the old *comtesse*, turning in startled bewilderment, found herself face to face with her goddaughter. With tense-drawn limbs, Berthe suffered herself to be jostled toward the entrance.

"But, my angel!" cried the *comtesse*, peering through her jeweled eyeglass. "What has it done to you, this sacred imbecile of a fire? What have you done with your hat? Why have you put on your cloak, my cabbage?"

"Godmamma, pray let me go." The *baronne* pushed back the restraining hand laid upon her arm, as she strove to follow the audacious little swindler who was even then making her escape through the crowd. To be sure, the *baronne* had only to raise her voice in denunciation to have the interloper seized and detained by a hundred willing hands. But to make a scene, to shiver her own reposeful elegance here in the Salon d'Automobile—such a proceeding was to the *Baronne d'Etretat* so impossible, through lifelong training and centuries of inherited tradition, as not even to offer itself to her mind. "Godmamma," she insisted, tensely, "let me go. Do not make a scene, I beg of you!"

"Not till you tell me what mischief you are scheming, my pretty little scamp!" The old lady laughed with the coquetry of a superannuated tease, tightening meanwhile the bony grasp upon the arm of her goddaughter. At

the same time the indignant eyes of the *baronne*, turned toward the entrance, beheld a folded card, inclosing a single violet, handed by a breathless messenger to the footman at the door.

With limbs that moved only through sheer force of a sustaining will, Berthe swept like a filmy purple cloud through the gateway and down between the mirrors of the long, Greek-arched foyer. Outside the door, in the fresh air of the early evening, she stood for an instant, hesitating. Then a hand seized her arm, a soft wrap of delicate fur was flung about her shoulders. "This way—make haste, my angel!" Half blind and stumbling, Berthe fell in at the open door of a waiting coupé. Then the direction was called to the driver: "Gare de Lyons—and remember, you must make it within the half hour!"

Then the marquis, with a murmured exclamation of ardor, took his place beside her. The carriage door was slammed to by an attendant upon the vision of the approaching *baronne*, and the travelers were gone.

## VI.

Next morning the *Baronne d'Etretat* awoke late, after a troubled sleep; and to her groping mind the events of the previous day slowly arranged themselves in complete justification of the anger which surged through her returning consciousness. A long-planned-for appearance spoiled, a valuable costume abstracted, and, as though that were not enough, a harassing scene following upon her return home, after her baffled chase to the Gare de Lyons. For the aged baron, her husband, being warned by a conscientious friend that the *Baronne d'Etretat*, still wearing her celebrated violet costume, had been seen boarding the Lyons express in company with that celebrated eater of hearts, the Marquis de Flâneur—the agitated baron, returning home in a jealous rage, would hardly be persuaded even by his wife's visible presence that the story was not true. Add to this unpleasant scene the necessity

which she had been under of stamping out the scandal by appearing with her husband in at least six places of fashionable amusement before she went to bed, and it is easy to understand the mood of savage resolve in which, after her cup of coffee, she commanded her carriage, in order to drive to Madame Clément's. The satisfaction that could recur to her was, to be sure, very small; but, nevertheless, in spite of every personal inconvenience, the impudent offender should not go unpunished, and justice should not be cheated of its portion!

For a moment, as the *baronne* recalled the irritating moment last evening when, arriving a moment too late at the station, she had seen the Lyons Limited vanish down the tracks on its journey to the south—for a moment the *baronne* regretted that her inherited scorn of existing republican institutions had made it impossible for her to appeal to the government for the immediate aid of the police. But no, after all, it consorted better with her dignity to leave all ignoble details to the care of the person responsible. When Madame Clément learned of the loss which she and her establishment had suffered, she might safely be intrusted to trace her absconding assistant. Even though the costume was lost beyond recall, at least the offender should be punished—this little animal without soul and without claim to mercy, this nameless clot of dirt swept in from the streets of Paris!

At the door of Paquin's establishment the *baronne* dismounted, and walked in frigid resolution up the carpeted stairs to the little white salon. As she pushed aside the curtain and entered, she was greeted with a shrill torrent of words: "Ah, my cabbage, it is you, come to make amends to your poor little godmother for the naughty tricks you played upon her yesterday!" Then, before her, lifted from a heap of violet velvet and chiffon, appeared the haggard eyes and freshly enameled face of the old *comtesse*. Madame Clément rushed forward with anxious deference to meet the *baronne*, and place a chair for her at the side of the *comtesse*.

"Madame the *baronne* was pleased with her costume yesterday, yes?"

Before the *baronne* was able to open her mouth in reply, her godmother snatched the words from her mouth with an airy giggle. "Was the *baronne* pleased with her costume, Madame Clément? For the success which her violets made I am sure you can ask no other guarantee than the fact that I am here so early in the morning, to command another toilet exactly similar in every detail!"

"Madame is too kind!" replied the gratified *patronne*. "But let me see—this velvet—I have another shade here, inclining more toward the amethyst. Excuse me for a moment, while I find it for you. Madame the *baronne* will have the goodness to wait for the tenth part of a second—yes?"

With a haughty gesture of her hand, the *baronne* deferred the approaching moment of retributory justice; then, as Madame Clément hurried from the room, her indignant client turned to hear the plans for the forthcoming costume, as proposed by the prattling old woman at her side. In spite of herself, the eye of the listening *baronne* wandered impatiently from the shaking golden head before her, through the door which Madame Clément had left open behind her—where about the long table the ring of seamstresses sat busily toiling.

At the head of the table sat the muff specialist, gaunt, unsmiling, prematurely aged; the whole energy of her nature concentrated upon some frivolous trifle of lace and ribbon between her hands. On either side, down the long table, stretched a line of little white faces, slanted with dull, joyless acquiescence over their monotonously moving hands. The room was dimly lighted from a half window and a smoky jet of gas; the atmosphere that blew through the door was heavy and hot. One of the girls glanced out and giggled faintly, but was reproved for her ill-timed merriment by a look from the *patronne*. Another sallow-faced young worker coughed faintly, and pressed her hand to her side.

"Tell me," cried the *comtesse*, coquettishly, "which matches my eyes best, the Tyrian or the violet?"

The *baronne* was silent. Why was it, she suddenly asked herself, that this painted and dyed old woman sat there in the plenitude of wealth and luxury, choosing toilets which could make only more glaring her outrageous travesty of youth, while these other human creatures, shut out from the world of joy and beauty, bent their young shoulders here in a dim, unending toil? Through that open door it seemed to her that she saw for the first time clearly, past her traditions of pride and splendor, to the earth—spectacle as it is—the everlasting pity and mystery of human things. After all, why had she so much, these other women so little?

And this one of their number in whose pursuit she had come, this daring young wretch who with violent hands had for one moment readjusted the unequal balance of destiny, this gutter-bred young savage, this rebellious untutored waif—was it worth while to drag her down from her short-lived

heaven of joy? Would it help, after all, to answer the eternal question, so suddenly unveiled to her, that the *Baronne d'Etretat* should put out her hand to crush this little, grimy butterfly which for a brief moment had fluttered up into the sun?

The door swung to and the voice of Madame Clément, suave and deferential, sounded in her ears. "And now, madame the *baronne*?"

The *baronne* rose quietly to her feet. "Nothing, Madame Clément. I came in merely for a moment, to meet my cousin, Madame de Mounay. She is not here?"

"No, madame the *baronne*, she has not been here. Madame the *baronne* was pleased with her costume?"

"But yes, I was enchanted—indeed, I hardly felt myself at the Salon at all. No, I will not wait, thank you. Kindly tell Madame de Mounay, if she comes, to join me at the Grand Café. God-mamma, you will be adorable! Good-day, Madame Clément." And slowly the *Baronne d'Etretat* swept down the stairs to her carriage.



## AT THE END OF THE WOOING

"FROM its frail stem tear not the rose," you said,  
 "Nor brush from wings so fragile all their gold,  
 Lest in your unrewarded hand you hold  
 Only, alas, torn plumes and petals dead!  
 Ah, plead no more"—you bowed your troubled head—  
 "Lest we who loved and listened, dear, of old,  
 In life's cage kiss this singing glory cold,  
 And find bruised petals where the rose hung red!"

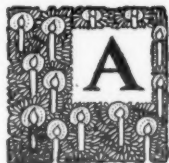
I take the solace, and endure the smart;  
 Bend close, O wondering brow, and turn to me  
 Those wistful lips, those eyes of mournful blue  
 Where still the old smile steals, for, light of heart,  
 The fleeting rose, the unassuaging voices, see,  
 I leave and lose, but You—oh, never You!

ARTHUR STRINGER.



# A SPRIG OF MEMORY

BY OWEN OLIVER



MAN is never safe from his memories. They hide round the corners of his mind and wait. David Dark, of Carlyle Court, millionaire, had many corners in his mind, and his memories waited round them very patiently.

It was two days before Christmas, and some of the memories had lain in ambush for fifteen years—since he was twenty-five—when the past opened fire upon him. He was sitting in his private office, totting up figures in his private notebook, and very satisfied with the present. Diadems had gone up several points since he bought, and he had sold United Rails for the fall. His trading business was paying a larger profit than usual; and Gray & Sons, who were in a tight corner, had offered to sell him theirs at a ruinous loss. The Amalgamated Transport Syndicate had yielded to his terms for joining their board, after a struggle of a year. The whole of the directors were his opponents, and he had beaten them all. He leaned back in his massive chair, and smiled at the thought. It was a stiff contortion of his features, much as if the heavy oak chair had smiled.

The smile came with difficulty, and went with difficulty. It was still wrinkling his features when he noticed that the room was warm. He opened the window and spared himself a moment of idle contemplation. It was a warm day for December, and the sun was struggling to shine through a thin mist. A memory crept stealthily from its corner; a memory of an old street and a misty sun. A laughing girl, carrying a

bunch of mistletoe, came down the street; and another memory came with her.

It was Doris Blake who walked gayly down the street of his memory; Doris Blake, who became Mrs. Hargreaves. She had been ten years a widow now, and he hadn't seen her for four or five. She couldn't have been more than seventeen as she walked down the street of memory; about as old as the laughing girl.

The girl with the mistletoe was pretty. She was very conscious of her dangerous burden, and she tried very hard to look unconscious. David Dark's smile became less oaken as he watched her; and when she caught his eye and flushed, he laughed outright. The laugh sounded as though his organs of merriment were a little rusty.

The girl turned away from him and bit her lip for a moment. Then she turned back and faced him and laughed, too. He looked an old gentleman to the eyes of seventeen; quite a nice old gentleman, she thought, and she would show him that she didn't care. So she picked a little sprig with a couple of berries, and threw it at him through the window, and ran away. He stooped to pick up the mistletoe, and when he looked out again she was gone; and an army of memories had come—memories of old friends and old Christmases. He held the sprig of mistletoe in his hand, and wondered where they came from! He put it slowly in his button-hole, and wondered that they did not go. It did not occur to him that the mistletoe could not remind him of anything else but old memories, because it had no link with the present, or with the past fifteen years.

A memory of his boyish kindness was in his voice when his confidential typist entered.

"You look poorly, Miss Ryder," he said; and then he remembered that he had given her notice, because she had asked for a raise. She had a widowed mother to keep, she had told him; and he had answered that this was her affair. The memory of his answer quarreled with his older memories; and he tried to brush it aside and answer his letters.

"In reply to your request for an extension of time," he dictated, "*I would remind you that—*" He stopped. The memories would not leave him alone. "What are you crying for?" he demanded, sharply.

"I—I am all right, sir," the girl said, steadying her voice bravely; "if you will kindly go on."

"Umph! *I would remind you that the contract expressly stipulates—* I suppose it's because you're leaving?"

"If you would let me stay on my present salary, sir—"

"Umph! I'll give you half the raise you asked for. *Expressly stipulates a penalty for exceeding the time fixed—*" He paused again. The memories were laughing at him; taking him by the shoulders; calling him a "stingy old thing." "I'll give you what you asked," he said, sharply. "*However—* Tut, tut! I don't want any thanks."

But the girl insisted on thanking him; and her thanks called out a crowd of memories of the days when he did kind deeds and was thanked for them; familiar memories that shook hands with him, slapped him on the shoulder, sat on the edge of his desk and swung their legs—unbusiness-like memories that prompted him to do unbusiness-like things. Under their influence he gave his correspondent the extension asked. He offered Gray & Sons two and one-half per cent. more than he had intended, and only five per cent. less than they asked. He took up the letter from the syndicate to answer, but he found the memories urging him to let even them down lightly. He did not know

what loss the memories might commit him to, if he went on. So he put all the letters away in a drawer, and told Miss Ryder she might go. She smiled at him from the door—or was it a memory that smiled? Doris used to look over her shoulder so—

Doris! Hargreaves did not leave her very well off, if he had heard rightly. He would have married her if he had not thought a gay young wife a hindrance in his career. Perhaps he would have married her, after all, if Hargreaves had not come along while he hesitated; for when he heard of her engagement— He brushed his hair aside, as if he brushed off an unpleasant memory; and looked down at the mistletoe.

"It's this confounded little sprig of—memory!" he muttered. "It's the fellow of the piece I had when I waited for Doris in the hall, and— She'd have ruined me with her—her good nature to people, if I'd married her. If I'd married her—" He got up and paced the room. "If you married her!" the memories kept saying; and he brought his hand down suddenly on a table.

"I'd have been a better man!" he cried, and stood with his fingers on the table, thinking out what manner of man he might have been. The memories stood round him; touched his arm; looked over his shoulder; and a coaxing memory pleaded with him to be the man that he might have been. "Just for once," it suggested, smilingly. "It's Christmas time; and you remember—you know what you remember."

He shook his head reproachfully at the sprig of mistletoe.

"You're going to cost me dear," he grumbled. "I've a good mind to put you in the fire and have done with you." He raised his hand toward the mistletoe, but a little memory sat upon it and laughed at him; and gradually he smiled again—a sad smile. "If I like to make a fool of myself, I can afford it," he said, and touched the bell for his secretary.

His secretary was young and smart and alert—a young man with an old

man's head. If David Dark allowed himself a liking for any one, it was for his secretary. He had not known why before; but now he saw the memory that entered with him. It was a memory of himself!

"I'm tempted to make a fool of myself, Lisle," he said, sharply. He had a vague hope that his resolute young assistant might help him to fight the army of memories. "I was thinking of—a Christmas box to some of—to all the office." He looked at Lisle doubtfully. "What do you think?"

"An excellent thing, sir," Lisle said, promptly. "Pay you a dozen times over."

David Dark frowned. The memories did not approve of this argument.

"That wasn't my reason," he said.

Lisle laughed boyishly. "It wasn't mine, either, sir! It—it's a decent thing to do. But decent things always pay, sir."

"Ye-es. Well, send them all in."

The staff filed in uneasily, each struggling to get behind the others. A visit to Mr. Dark's sanctum had nothing but terrors for them. Their only doubt was whether it meant reprimand, dismissal or a reduction of wages. He smiled at them; but they were not sure whether he meant it for a smile, or if the smile was meant for them. It was not for them really; and indeed he scarcely saw them, or himself; only a memory of a kindly, gray-haired employer, and of himself standing among a row of smiling clerks. His old employer always began his Christmas speech with "My dear fellows"; but *he* could not begin like that. He did not know how to address them. So he plunged into his subject at once.

"I have had a successful year," he told them. "Your work has contributed to this. I wish the cashier to pay you each a month's salary as a token of my appreciation. That's all."

He waved his hand to dismiss them, and they were moving toward the door, too astonished to speak, when the secretary whispered to the manager, and the manager stopped them.

"We wish to express our hearty

thanks, sir," the manager said; "and to assure you of our endeavor to assist you by our efforts in future years."

He bowed, and the rest bowed, and David Dark bowed; but the chilliness of it all contrasted painfully with his warm memories. The secretary eased the situation a little by coming forward with outstretched hand as the others departed.

"A Merry Christmas, sir," he said. "It has been a privilege and a pleasure to me to work for you."

Even that hurt David Dark, because he knew that no one but his secretary could say it to him; and *he* only said it, he thought, because he was young and saw kindnesses where none were intended.

"The rest of them take my money," he told himself, bitterly, "and hate me. There isn't one that feels a spark of gratitude. I'll throw these ridiculous memories aside, and be myself again." He might have done so, but Miss Ryder came in softly, and touched his arm, as he sat with his head on his hand.

"I wanted to thank you again, sir," she said, timidly. "I—I—God bless you, sir!"

David Dark looked up and smiled with sudden warmth; a real flesh and blood smile.

"God bless you, my dear," he said. "You have been a very good girl."

He made a resolution, without any prompting from the memories, to be kind to little, fatherless Miss Ryder. Before she passes out of the story, let it be recorded that he kept the resolution.

"God bless you!" If there are any memories in any words for any man, there are memories in these. They crowded round David Dark as he sat silently in his chair. They rose with him when he got up to put on his hat and coat. They bowed with him when his clerks sprang in a body to open the door as he departed. They followed him as he walked "home." They entered with him when he came to the house of twenty rooms, of which he used three. One of them took him by the arm and led him to a drawer, where

he found a faded photograph—the photograph of Doris, who had become Mrs. Hargreaves; and after that he was the slave of the memories.

It would take a book to write down all the kind deeds that he did under their command. He was buying things "to be sent" all that evening. He spent the next morning—which was a holiday, being Christmas Eve—at his library desk, writing letters and checks. In the afternoon he went to his office, and let himself in with his private key, to get another check book and some more loose cash out of the safe. He spent the evening with the memories—and the photograph. He hunted up the address of the memory who was called Doris Hargreaves. It was a modest house in a modest street; and he decided to write and ask if there was any way in which he could possibly be of assistance to her. "For the sake of our old friendship," he would write, "and its pleasant memories." He had realized at last that memories are a power in the world at Christmas time.

He could not write the letter to his satisfaction that night; the phrase about the memories led him away to so many bypaths of recollection. He wandered in them in his dreams, and the memories wandered with him. They were wishing him "A Merry Christmas" when he woke; and the tears came very near his stern eyes.

They were *only* memories. That was the trouble. There was no one to wish him the season's greetings now. A desire for a friendly voice and a friendly word overmastered him. He *must* be wished "A Merry Christmas" by some one who would say it sincerely. He made a sudden resolution. He would call on Mrs. Hargreaves.

He unmade the resolution and made it again, a dozen times. She would be angry with him for his long neglect, he told himself, if he called; but that was not the real reason for his hesitation. No one who knew Doris Hargreaves well could stand in great fear of anger or unkindness from her. What he really feared was the change that he expected to find in her after all these

years; the change from the charming memory that had come laughingly from his mind's dark recesses. He would not call, he decided many times; but he went.

The house was not so poor as he had expected, and it was not at all dingy; and Doris did not look greatly altered as she came forward to greet him. She was older, of course, and not quite so impetuous; but she had the same pretty face, the same bewitching manner, and the same sweet voice that he remembered. Time is kind to the kindly.

"So you have come to see me," she said. "I am glad." The memory of her had spoken just so.

"Did you expect to see me," he asked, "Dor—Mrs. Hargreaves?"

"I have been expecting you for some years," she reproached him, gently. He had expected so much reproach—no less and no more.

"I ought to have come before," he owned.

"You ought to have come if you wanted to see me," she said; "not unless."

He traced the pattern of the carpet with his stick. He ought to have wanted to see her, he was thinking; but he was not so foolish as to tell her he had not.

"I know now how much I wanted to see you," he said.

"And what has brought you now?" she asked, bending over some fancy work. She seemed just her memory to him; just her graceful memory.

"I thought perhaps I could be of assistance to you. I am a very rich man now, Doris. I suppose I ought to call you Mrs. Hargreaves; but the old memories—"

"The old memories!" She sighed softly. "Yes, I suppose you ought; but I have my memories, too. It doesn't much matter what you call me. I am getting an old woman."

"You don't look old, Doris. It is I who have aged, not you. Look at me."

She glanced up from her work, and nodded slowly.

"I don't need help," she said, "thank you—David. I have enough for my

needs; and I never cared much for money, you know. So you think my looks haven't altered very much? Shall I tell you why they haven't? Because I haven't altered very much. I dare say I've grown a *little* wiser—it was very necessary, wasn't it?—but I am not wise. I still believe in things. I still like people. I still *live*. I've had a happier life than you, David, though you mayn't think so. Of course I've had my troubles; but they've made me kinder to others, and that has made them kinder to me. You'd be a happier man if you had had more troubles. That is the foolish way I always talked, isn't it? And you used to get cross with me, if you remember; but I suppose you haven't had time for memories."

David Dark groaned and threw out his hands.

"I've let them slip away from me," he said. "I've murdered the past—lived half a life—and now—they've come—I'd have been a better man if you'd married me, Doris."

Mrs. Hargreaves looked up suddenly from the fancy work; and *she* made an impatient movement with her hands.

"You never asked me!" she cried, almost passionately.

"And if I had?"

She set her lips and resumed her sewing.

"That," she said, "is only a memory. Well, it's fifteen years ago, and perhaps it doesn't matter if I confess it. Yes, I should have married you, David."

"And I should have been a better man," he repeated, half to himself.

"It is never too late, to be good," she answered, in a quiet, level voice. "And so the memories have brought you; the memories that you have put aside for ambition and money-making all these years. What brought the memories, David?"

He told her how the memories came with the laughing girl—the girl like *she* had been—and the little sprig of mistletoe. "She was a bonny girl," he said, enthusiastically. "God bless her!"

Mrs. Hargreaves laid down her work and looked up at him. Her face had gone very pale.

"I understand," she said. "You want me to find her for you. She is a child, and you cannot put the clock back twenty years. I shall not." She clinched her hands with sudden anger. "I shall *not*!" she repeated.

David Dark picked up her work, which had fallen to the floor, and handed it to her; and slowly smiled, and shook his head.

"I had forgotten you could look like that," he said, watching her admiringly. "I—I think the clock has stopped still with *you*. You were always wrong when you got cross, Doris; but you didn't get cross very often. No, I didn't think of my little friend in that way. It wasn't she whom I saw really, but you; my memory of you; you as you used to be when—but you haven't altered so much, Doris. It is I who have altered. I—I was in love with you then; and you were a little in love with me. The clock has gone on with me, as you say, and I can't put it back; but I haven't altered so much as you have in one way, because I still love you—I always have loved you, and it only needed this to tell me—this little sprig of memory. Are there no memories that it can awaken in you? No memories—"

She rose from her chair suddenly, and groped with her arms through the rain of tears in her eyes.

"I have always remembered," she cried. "I needed no sprig of memory."

David Dark needs no sprig of memory now, he says. He has his wife, and memories do not matter; but when he has leisure to remember his life with her, he finds that he is laying up a store of remembrances which are very good; and when the bonny girl—for his wife found her out for him—was married to his secretary, he gave him a big check, and her a little brooch with a jeweled sprig of mistletoe.

"May it keep you as you were then," he said, "as you are now—this little sprig of memory."

# ELLEN BERWICK

## III.

THE workaday gods were very kind to me on the day when I began my labors in Mr. Hennen's office. It was one morning in December, and New York was at its best—cold enough to be tonic, but not cold enough to creep to the marrow of one's bones; windless, bright and blue. I was due at the office at half-past nine, but with true new-broom enthusiasm I left the house at half-past eight. I walked down Broadway. The street was full of people hurrying to work—the class between the more depressed laborers of the early morning and the more splendid capitalists of an hour and a half later. I felt buoyant and proud. It was a great thing, I told myself, as I swung down through the narrow chasm between the high, uneven walls, to be an integral factor in the working world, the world of producers, not mere consumers.

Rejoice we are allied  
To that which doth provide  
And not partake—

I spouted to myself, and narrowly dodged a dray swerving suddenly into a side street.

On the occasion of my former visit to the offices of Hennen & Charter, I had been too breathless to carry away with me any impression more accurate than that of mere business splendor. This morning, for all the quick beating of my heart when I left the elevator and followed the gilt finger pointing me along the hall to the entrance, and for all my breathlessness as I turned the knob, I was able to take a fairly discerning notice of my surroundings. The building into which I had come was enormous, with half a dozen ele-

BY ANNE O'HAGAN

vators on each side of the entrance hall, swallowing people, emitting them, with a sort of automatic precision in spite of the air of hurry. It seemed to me their movements, as they dashed hither and thither through the halls,

were jerky, like the movements of the actors in a kinetoscope play.

The outer office of Hennen & Charter was very magnificent. It was high enough in the building to command a view of the North River and the Jersey shore beyond. Across the front was a succession of windows. The room contained deep leather chairs, leather couches, a great table, carved and polished, and half covered with papers, magazines and stationery. On the right of the room a high brick mantel outlined a broad fireplace, in which a crackling fire of logs was already lighted. There were pictures on the walls—the most incongruous pictures, it seemed to me then—charming etchings of shore and woods, some remarkable examples of the old wood engraving processes, and a few sporting prints.

Beside the fireplace a door led into another office, a degree more private than this and furnished in substantially the same fashion. A long corridor led from this, lined with wire cages, in which a great many young men seemed to be very busy doing things, to me then incomprehensible. Each cage had its little window of communication with the corridor. Above each a sign testified to its business in the office—here messengers were received, there accounts were looked up, etc. At the end of the corridor there was another office, its woodwork as ivory-white as that of a fine lady's boudoir, its floor covered with a lustrous Turkish rug, its desks of polished rosewood. There



were two of these desks, and a writing table, revolving chairs, a leather-covered couch and a rocking-chair. Two doors led from this room, one to the south and one to the west. The ground glass on each bore the name of the occupant—Mr. Hennen, Mr. Charter.

There was no one in this office yet, and here the *blasé*, curly-haired boy of sixteen, who had condescended to lead me hither, left me, with the remark that Miss O'Dowd would soon be in. I sat down in the rocking-chair and awaited her. She was to spend a few days in initiating me into my duties.

I heard her coming while she was still some distance down the corridor. There was nothing coquettish about the rustle of Miss O'Dowd's skirts, and nothing fairylike about her footfall. The only mark of femininity about her approach was a squeak of percaline. She hustled in, reminding me of a square-rigged ship, in spite of the somberness of her black clothes; for there was an untapering breadth about her person. Her broad, kindly face above her shabby collar of black astrakhan was very ruddy; the skin pulled tight across the features. Her small eyes twinkled shrewdly and kindly upon the world. She looked all of her forty years, and seemed the sort of woman who would have no pride in concealing any of them.

"So you're here first, my dear," she said, expansively. "Oh, well, it will do no harm in the beginning, and you'll soon get over it. I hope you haven't been waiting long."

I assured her that I had just come, and then I murmured a few excuses that I should be obtruding my inexperience upon her last few crowded days of spinsterhood.

"You must have so many things to do," I said, "that I feel really conscience-stricken at taking up any of your time."

"Do?" she cried. "What would I be doing? Sure, it's no great matter for me and Mr. Emery—he's the gentleman I'm marrying, my dear—to walk to St. Veronica's of a morning and have Father Quinn say the necessary words."

"I thought brides always had lots of last things to do," I explained. "I thought there were things to buy for themselves and their houses, and all that sort of thing."

"I'm buying very little for myself," said Miss O'Dowd, breezily, meantime revealing that one of the panels of the wall was the door of a roomy closet, in which she was hanging up her wraps, and mine also. "Frank fell in love with me—if that's what you call it—in my everyday clothes, and I guess if I got him without finery I'll keep him without it. And as for the house, I've misgivings that I'll need something to keep me busy when he goes off to work in the morning, and I find myself with ten spare hours where I've not been used to ten spare minutes. So I'm leaving the buying till after we're married. Anyway, we'll know what we want better then."

She seemed to me a very voluble woman, and I wondered if she possessed that quality of reticence which I had understood to be the chief necessity of a broker's stenographer. I soon discovered that her reserve in anything that concerned her employer's business was as marked as her volubility in regard to her own affairs. She gave me all sorts of good advice as she showed me various things which I needed to know about the office.

"Don't you ever get to thinking that you know anything about stocks because you're typewriter in a broker's," she admonished me. "They almost all do, more's the pity. After an office boy's been here two weeks, he gets it into his head that he can tell by the way Mr. Charter comes in of a morning just how Northeastern and Southwestern is going to go that day, and he's all for making for the curb to back his judgment with his dollar. The clerks and all of them—oh, it's awful sometimes! Now, I'll tell you one thing, my dear, speculation is nonsense for anybody, and it's rank nonsense in a broker's office for anybody but the firm. They can do all that's necessary; and you're likely enough to find yourself out on the street some fine day when

they've gone under, without complicating the situation on your own account."

"And have you never speculated, Miss O'Dowd?" I asked her. She turned her head quickly and looked at me with sharp amusement.

"I have," she said, succinctly, "and I've been sorry for it. I got myself in a nice little hole once, and if it hadn't been for Mr. Hennen, I'd have been trying to find the bottom of it yet. Oh, I'm preaching to you from experience—not that you'll pay the least attention. But I've done my duty, anyway, and when you get your family down in—Maine, it is, isn't it, where you come from?—to mortgage the farm so that you can invest in wild-cat mining stock, I'll have no ground to reproach myself for being silent when I should have spoken."

Then she dropped her friendly chatter, and with the gravity and precision of an excellent machine proceeded to instruct me in the details of my work.

By and by the occupant of the other typewriting desk came in—Mr. Charter's stenographer, a young man with the pale face of a confirmed pie-eater, and a bulging forehead. He acknowledged his introduction to me with a pompous patronage of manner, and opined that we would be able to get on together very well. Later, Mr. Hennen hurried through, pausing for a minute to bid me an absent-minded, friendly welcome. Mr. Charter, who arrived still later, had an air of more abundant leisure, and stopped long enough to infuse into the workaday atmosphere a sort of social grace and charm.

Two things amazed me then, and they have never ceased to seem to me wonderful. Of all the occupations which man has evolved from his circumstances to plague his days and rob his nights of rest, I can imagine none so nerve-racking, so maddening in all its details, as a stockbroker's. If any men have excuse for wild eyes and haggard expressions, it is they. Their offices are a sort of polite pandemonium. The everlasting "click, click" of the ticker splinters the very air with its

monotonous, insistent note; the telephone bells are silent almost never. Telegraph boys are constantly hurling themselves into the midst of business. Clients are always inopportunistly appearing. To place the orders on a day when stocks are fluctuating seems to me yet a task beyond human power. In those early days, I should have said in my ignorance that a stockbroker would begin his day by forgetting his necktie, disregarding his hair, omitting his breakfast, and generally neglecting himself; and that he would end it in the psychopathic ward of Bellevue Hospital, borne thither in an ambulance, a shrieking maniac, at five o'clock.

As a matter of fact, I have never seen men so carefully dressed as the brokers with whom I came to have a slight acquaintance. The way in which the pin was placed in George Hennen's cravat was a liberal education to a young person from Agonquitt, and I had but to glance at Mr. Charter's spats to know how vast a gulf there was between covering the feet and dressing them. I had never seen men more bland, suave and unhurried in their manner than they were generally. It is, of course, a byword that the stockbroker, instead of becoming an emaciated bundle of nerves, grows into a portly middle age. Neither of the members of my firm had reached the boundary line of youth, and they were not yet threatened with stoutness, but it was not any overnervousness that kept them slim, but, I am inclined to think, somewhat painstaking exercise.

At noon on my first day, Miss O'Dowd took me out to luncheon. She was, as usual, very emphatic and amusing in her advice on the subject of luncheons.

"It's best to begin with Bennett's," she volunteered. "Of course there'll be days when nothing less than the Savarin will do for you, but by and large it's Bennett's that'll be your noonday habitat. So come along, my dear, and see what you're in for."

We joined a jostling throng on Broadway, and walked up to an entrance which seemed chiefly made of

plate glass. Inside the great window a white-jacketed, white-capped man was tossing dough in little balls upon a long greased iron. It was like watching a Japanese juggler to see him. The sheet of plate glass which separated him from the sidewalk bore numerous porcelain letter advertisements setting forth the advantages of Bennett's viands and their prices. Through the swinging door, beside the window, a continuous stream of men and women entered the place.

We found room to sit down together at a table in the upper story. It was a long, polished, wooden table, capable of seating twelve, six on a side. There were about twelve such tables between us and the window, which was beaded with steam. Every table was full. Girls of all ages, complexions and styles of dress sat there devouring hash or chowder or griddle cakes or pie and coffee. I was struck with the *chic* air and the prettiness of most of them. Even those who defied their digestions with pie and tea for a noonday meal seemed so far to have escaped the penalty of their defiance, and were as bright-eyed and clear-skinned as their conscientious neighbors who ate eggs and Graham toast.

Somehow the sight of all these girls did not fill me with the depression which the dining room at the Margaret Louisa induced in me. In the first place, they were younger, more alert and alive; that they were working-women went without saying, for only workers were to be found down in that region; that they were poor was an equally foregone conclusion, for Bennett's appeals only to the poor or the very thrifty. Yet they all seemed buoyant—almost “perky”—and good-humored. I listened to as much of their conversation as I could overhear, expecting to be enlightened in regard to their various occupations. But all that I learned concerning them was that they frequented dances, had ideas on clothes, and took a healthful, normal interest in what “he” said, and what “he” had promised to do next Sunday.

The next day Miss O'Dowd, continu-

ing my education, took me to a sort of working-women's lunch club downtown. Here no such bargains in nourishment were to be had as at Bennett's, but in other respects the place seemed to me delightful. There was a big room with several tables spread for the meal. There were pictures on the neutral-tinted wall, and curtains instead of the steam from the kitchen veiled the windows. On the ledges and shelves were plants. In an alcove behind the dining room was a space with corner couches, easy-chairs and a writing table. Beyond this, again, was a dressing room, where one might brush her clothes, black her boots, mend an inopportune tear, or put on a missing button. It was infinitely quieter than Bennett's, and the table d'hôte luncheon was appetizing and nourishing, if not “interesting.” I learned later that a *sine qua non* of food in New York was “interest.”

Miss O'Dowd was right. I patronized Bennett's more than any other restaurant, for I was determined to make up what I had spent from my emergency fund. So I became one of the mob that trailed up and down the stairs, sat at the uncovered tables, had food banged down before them in porcelain of most astonishing thickness, and alternated between roast beef hash and clam chowder. Some days, in an abandon of recklessness, I would order poached eggs and pie. Again, as a protest against too long a period of virtuous dieting, I would court indigestion with wheat cakes and maple syrup; and I must acknowledge that, whatever their peptic effect, they were a very delicious form of hot dough, vastly superior to anything that “mother used to make.”

The attitude of my fellow-workers was one of the most interesting things in the office to me: Mr. Charter's secretary, Wyeth, was pompous and discursive, but kindly. The cashier, Ferritt, who was in direct charge of the office forces, acting indeed as chief clerk, was breezy, familiar and intensely inquisitive. I resented his manner even before I became convinced that he was

not trustworthy, or, at any rate, that he was trying to extract information from me. The other clerks and the boys were polite and friendly according to their various lights. Ferritt, however, was responsible for a brief coolness between the rest of the staff and me, when he managed to implant the notion that it was a great mistake for the head of the house to have a woman for stenographer. "She's bound to talk outside; women always do," he is reported to have said; and even the prompt gibe which was thrown back at him—that he had failed to induce Miss O'Dowd to talk—did not altogether remove the impression from the force that I would prove a leaky vessel.

However, Mr. Ferritt's inquisitiveness and his criticisms disturbed me very little. I went on the even tenor of my way, making no very appalling mistakes, learning a good deal day by day, and gradually coming to understand the jargon of the business. The temptation to speculate never assailed me even when my savings had achieved two ciphers on the right side of the decimal point, and a curb broker might have been willing to handle them for me. Agonquitt caution and Miss O'Dowd's warning stood me in good stead; though, of course, the time came when I was quite sure that I could tell by Mr. Hennen's manner or Mr. Charter's voice just what would be a wise investment. And yet it was the office that finally drove me into an extravagance scarcely less insane than speculation.

I had gone stalking by the row of cages one morning, wearing, of course, my Miss-Keziah-made clothes. My hair, according to our Agonquitt notions of what was suitable for a working-woman, was very well coiffed. That is, it was brushed back from my forehead, braided and wound neatly about my head in the back. If I had been thinking about my appearance at all, I should doubtless have taken great satisfaction in the thought that it was eminently suitable to my occupation. But when from one of the cages a voice pursued me, saying, "Was that *Pros-*

*sie* just went by?" I felt a sudden misgiving in regard to my looks; for I had been to see "Candida."

The nickname rankled all day. I scarcely looked up from my work to answer Mr. Charter's badinage when he stood for a few minutes beside my desk, not from access of virtue or a growing appreciation of the value of time, but because I thought that I was not charmingly enough gotten up to take appropriate part in idle conversation.

The day's work happened to be brief on that occasion, and I was able to make my escape about four o'clock. Instead of going home to the sunny attic room, laying logs upon the brass fire-dogs, making myself tea, calling in Lester Franklin or Miss Putnam or one of the medical students to share it, mending my stockings, doing my knitting, attending to my correspondence, or, in fact, employing my leisure in any of the dozen sane and cheerful ways in which I might have, I made straight for the shops. It was true that I was a dowdy, I decided, as I caught a glimpse of myself faintly shadowed in the big show windows! And a very common species of reasoning persuaded me that it was a bad business policy to be one. Yet I knew in my heart that if I went decently clothed in sacking, the fact would probably never be communicated by Mr. George Hennen's eyes to his intelligence, and that if it were, it would cause him not a single qualm. No, it was not for Mr. George Hennen that I decided to renovate my wardrobe and to change my style of hairdressing.

I am not sure that it was on account of Robert Matthews, either, though it had occurred to me from time to time that I was scarcely a fit companion piece for that glass of fashion and mold of form when he took me out with him. He had done so two or three times since I had been in the office. Now it was to an art exhibition, now to dinner, and again to the theater. Each time I was obliged to admit to myself that, as far as clothes went, I cast no particular credit upon my escort.

That afternoon, during the hour in which the salespeople were willing to show garments, I tried on half a dozen suits. At the end of the time I had learned one of the great lessons in the art of dressing—it is impossible to buy well and in a hurry; so I deferred my blossoming forth from a grub into a butterfly for a few days. But the New York fever had entered my veins; I might never learn how to dress, but never again would I be content to go without pretty things. The shops, the sumptuously dressed people on the brilliant streets, in the restaurants and theaters, had done their perfect work. Ellen Berwick of Agonquitt, Maine, and somewhat of Wellesley College, had put aside forever her lofty scorn of chiffons.

It was, of course, impossible that I should go on forever without mistakes in the office. On the afternoon of the day following the one when I had plunged into the vortex of ready-made clothes, I sat taking dictation from Mr. Hennen. It may be that my mind was more intent upon the merits of a gun-metal gray velveteen than upon the scheme he was outlining to his correspondent in regard to the merging of the Chicago and Lake Minnehaha Railroad into the Great Transcontinental. I was not conscious of wool-gathering wits, and I am still inclined to think that Mr. Hennen may have absent-mindedly omitted his own negative. At any rate, after dictating the letter, he hurried away, telling me to sign it for him and mail it. The next day I was summoned into his office, and for the first time saw my chief in a very bad temper.

He generally spoke with a certain hesitation, and I had often wondered how it was possible for him, with his boyish figure, his absent-minded manner and his slow speech, to compete with the great giants of stature, voice and bearing on the floor of the exchange. Mr. Hennen angry, however, made it all perfectly clear to me. Excite him sufficiently, and he was no longer slow or unimpressive. To be sure, he did not raise his voice, but he

spoke with a sort of galvanic force all the more remarkable because of its quiet. And this afternoon he proceeded, as Tommy, the youngest of the office boys, informed the outer office, to "lay me out." I had omitted the negative on which the entire scheme was hinged, he declared, and he expressed his surprise, disgust and annoyance with an incisive eloquence that made me hot with shame and anger, and totally at a loss for repartee. I did manage to explain that I thought I had taken the dictation accurately, and he looked at me from beneath level lids of scorn.

"Even if I had been guilty of such a blunder in my dictation," he said, "have you not sufficient intelligence, Miss Berwick, to tell the drift of a letter when you read it? Have you been in this office for three weeks, have you taken not less than twenty memoranda concerning the Lake Minnehaha and Transcontinental deal, without having the vaguest notion of what our intentions are? Even if I did omit the 'not'—which I am strongly inclined to doubt—haven't you enough ordinary common sense to put it in?"

It did not add to my comfort at that moment to know that Mr. Charter had come into the room and had overheard this onslaught upon my intelligence. I could have cried with anger and mortification. I was a conceited young woman, and I wished to make no mistakes; and I was a proud young woman, unaccustomed to such reproof as this; and lastly, I was a vain young woman, and would rather have been reprimanded in hearing of anyone else on earth than Mr. Archibald Charter.

I thought of resigning on the spot with a tragedy-queen air; I thought of weeping. What I did was to bite my lip, choke back a strangling sob, and say:

"I am very sorry, Mr. Hennen."

"Sorry!" snorted Mr. Hennen, in a voice that spoke volumes concerning his view of mere repentance. And then he resumed control of his temper. "Very well, then, Miss Berwick. You may go. Don't let a thing like this oc-

cur again." And, feeling very much like a twelve-year-old who has been misbehaving in the jam closet, I retreated from the room.

It was only a few days before Christmas, and I had wanted to do my Christmas shopping that afternoon. I could see, however, that it was not an opportune time to ask permission to leave the office early, so I sat at the typewriter, pounding away at it, blinking back tears, and feeling the rise of that anguish of homesickness which always follows the discovery that the world beyond the home is not an appreciative place. I thought of Mr. Hennen's anger, and I longed for the frozen fields, the hard rutted roads, the stretches of pine and fir, with the sunset smoldering behind them. I thought of Mr. Charter's look, which I imagined had been one of half-amused, half-contemptuous interest, and I wanted the loving, admiring eyes of my own people. I thought of Christmas in my attic, and I wanted it in the big house at home. I believe that at this point a tear rolled down my nose and splashed upon my copy.

The door of Mr. Hennen's office swung open, and I heard Mr. Charter's voice, almost angry, say: "You owe it to yourself as well as her; bullyragging a woman!" Then he departed into his own office, and in a few minutes Mr. Hennen came out and stood at the corner of my desk.

"I must make you an apology, Miss Berwick," he said, in his old halting manner. "I—I have no doubt that your transcription was perfectly accurate; and if Fenwick was confused by the omission of the 'not,' surely I can't blame you for—for not knowing how important it was. I hope you'll overlook my outbreak and put it down to a headache. I've got a screaming one."

At this the tears which I had been able to keep back at his anger welled up into my eyes. "Please don't say anything about it," I begged. "I know it was all my own fault."

"Hadn't you better shut up shop for the day?" he asked. "You aren't

rushed, are you? And you must have a lot of Christmas things you want to do. I know Mrs. Hennen is nearly distracted."

There was a glow of gratitude in my heart toward Mr. Charter as I put on my things and made my way to the street. It was he, I knew, who had brought the chief to so swift a repentance for his reprimand. At the door of the building I met him. I think I tried to tell him that I knew and appreciated his kindness. He brushed my thanks aside with a laugh, and turned to walk with me toward the car.

"I think a cup of tea would do you no harm after that little excitement, Miss Berwick," he observed. "Have you time? Won't you come into the Savarin and have one with me?"

Of course I had time, and in a few minutes I was seated in the almost deserted restaurant. It was very warm after the windy street, the light was very soft and restful; the thick carpets, the noiseless waiters, the walls delicate and bright, all contributed to make the atmosphere seductive. I forgot my shopping, and dawdled over the tea and muffins. I think I felt that it was due to Mr. Charter for me to be as sprightly and entertaining as I could. I know that I exerted myself to this end on some pretense or other, and the result not even my untested Agonquitt instinct could doubt. He was so responsive to my efforts, he enjoyed the half hour so much, that he actually asked me to go to dinner. And I accepted with a sense that I owed it to my work and my employer to banish as thoroughly as possible the recollection of the afternoon's scene and prepare myself to come smiling to the office in the morning. The truth is that I was starving for a good time.

I had it. The little dinner in the beautiful, softly brilliant Fifth Avenue restaurant, all pale mauve and yellow tints, exotic plants and distant music—the antithesis in elegance, if not in price, of the one to which we had gone on the earlier occasion—was perfect. He was gay, entertaining, subtly flattering. I went home all aglow with satisfied



vanity and tremulous, undefined expectation.

The next morning Mr. Hennen's bell rang for me. Notebook in hand, I went into his office, but I saw at once that he did not intend to give me any dictation. Awkwardly he asked me to sit down, awkwardly he twirled upon the chair before his desk. He evaded my eye, cleared his throat several times, and finally, with a painful blush, he began.

"Miss Berwick," he said, "I hope you will not misunderstand—what—what I am going to say to you. If—if the situation were a little different from what it is, I should not—er—presume. But you are—a daughter of an old neighbor of my mother's. And Mr. Charter's sister is my wife. So that—so that the situation is—er—er—a little complicated."

I stared at him in amazement and alarm. I had felt the red burn my face up to the roots of my hair as the drift of his remarks had penetrated my understanding. Then the blood had gone, and I felt very cold and weak, and my hands lay limp in my lap.

"I don't know what you mean," I managed to say. "Is it—is it because I am your stenographer?"

Mr. Hennen seemed scarcely to hear my question. He had fixed his eyes upon the further wall of the room, and was evidently occupied in formulating his next speech. Finally it came forth.

"You see," he said, "Mrs. Charter is—well, they don't hit it off very well. She's as jealous as the devil—pardon me, Miss Berwick—and a little dinner—"

"Mrs. Charter?" I faltered. "Is—do you mean—is it that Mr. Charter is married?"

"Why, didn't you know?" exclaimed Mr. Hennen.

"Know!" I cried.

Somehow we managed to make our meanings mutually clear. I succeeded in conveying to him the information that I had never dreamed Mr. Charter was married, and that, according to the Agonquitt standards which were mine, it was almost criminal for a

young woman to go about with a married man. And he succeeded in making me understand that Mrs. Charter maintained a very jealous espionage over her husband, and that his conduct warranted it, since it was not too repugnant a thing for her to do. Mrs. Charter, I learned, was the possessor of all the wealth in the household, a fact which she never forgot or allowed her husband to forget. Altogether, I went out of the private office with material ready to construct a very unpleasant figure of a wife. But at the time I was engaged only in thinking of the mortification put upon me by the husband.

It was such a blow to my vanity—not the vanity which had been pleased with the obvious admiration and the attention of an attractive man, but the vanity of an ignorant young woman, who has felt herself equal to coping with all situations, who believes herself a philosopher because she has read a few volumes of philosophy, who thinks that she knows life because she has read novels. Because I had known myself to be a girl of native intelligence, of fair education and of respectable position, it had never occurred to my superb arrogance to question my ability to take care of myself in any situation in life. And here I had been guilty of a breach of decorum as bad as a seventeen-year-old girl of no ancestry, no mental training, no pride of respectable position. I was hot with rage and shame, and yet it did not occur to me to blame Mr. Charter very severely. He had not mentioned that he numbered a wife among his possessions, to be sure, but, then, he had said nothing whatever about it. He had probably assumed that I knew it, since I knew the Hennens, and had ignored it as one ignores any unpleasant fact. In short, he thought of me, I told myself, as he might have thought of any chorus girl whom he inclined to favor with a series of late suppers.

My eyes were red with tears that evening, and I was exhausted for want of dinner as well as from weeping, when Bob's card came up to me. At first I decided I could not see him. Then the

thought of his kind, plain face—his homely face, in the nice sense of homely—brought me down to the parlor. He was not notably tactful, Bob, and he commented upon the traces of tears with an embarrassing frankness. However, he told me that he had come to beg me to keep Christmas with him, for he could not get down to Agonquitt for the festival, and he had a proper Agonquitt feeling that the day was not to be spent with heathen and strangers; and

I was able to forgive him any amount of tactlessness. I sent him out for oysters, and in my room, over the chafing dish which had been added to my possessions, we cooked them into a delicious mess, and the horrid day ended less horribly than I had expected.

Ended? Perhaps not quite. For it was a long-drawn sob of my own that woke me in the middle of the night, and the pillow beneath my cheek was wet with tears I had been shedding.



## THE OPEN DOOR

WHY should I house in grim Reality  
 When I need only close my eyes to be  
 Within another world—who knows how far  
 From care and task, and all dull things that are.

Here beckon all the olden tales I love,  
 With all the wonder and the thrill thereof;  
 Here tarry still the ancient mysteries  
 Of treasure-laden land beyond the seas.

Here I awaken at the huntsman's horn  
 Stirring the echoes of the early morn,  
 And strain to see the plumed horsemen prance  
 Adown the dim demesne of gay romance.

And here, when twilight skies brood low and gray,  
 Sometimes I hear a wandering piper play  
 A lost Arcadian melody, so sweet  
 None other dare its cadences repeat.

There is no weariness nor solitude,  
 Since I may have companioning my mood  
 Shadows more real than any burdens seem,  
 When I pass through the open door of Dream!

CHARLOTTE BECKER.

# THE WARRENERS

## CHAPTER XXII.



THE affairs of the N. E. W. progressed with the slow dignity of a first-class, confidence-inspiring interest. Quotations were steady. Bellamy was understood to be in at about fifty, and, as he said, he "forgot all about his block." Twice during the winter George went West with others of the directors.

When he reached home after his last trip, in the spring, his wife was not there. She found him walking to and fro in the library that evening, when she came in from New York.

"Did you have dinner all right? I phoned them to give it to you. I missed my train."

She asked him nothing about his trip or its results, her chief idea when she was with him being how soon she could decently escape. But this night her husband actually advanced a claim upon her time and presence.

"Say, sit down here a minute, Gert, will you? I want to speak to you."

He might well want to speak to her! She daily wondered how and when he would discover what was plain to all eyes but his already—and his blindness met with a contemptuous pity from her. Although she did not really care whether he did find out or not, she *wanted first to be sure that McAllister would marry her*; and she was not sure, not at all sure! So she kept on the right side of George.

He said, agreeably: "Those were pretty heavy checks I sent you on, Gert, and I couldn't afford them. I can't begin to afford such claims—I can't keep the pace. A man ought to have an income of thirty thousand a year to go on as I'm going."

He saw her brows contract. With an impatient gesture she threw off her hat and pushed her hair petulantly back.

"I should think your trip out there would have done you good, and not make you come back cross—"

"It did," he broke in. "It's a fine country, and I can tell you it made me want to pull up stakes and get out there. I'd like to go out there and settle—we could live on half or a quarter what we spend, and I could be of great use to the country."

She simply stared at him; then she laughed:

"*Go West to live!* Well, you don't see me do it! Slocum's dead enough—if we move, I guess it will have to be to New York."

Warrenner went on: "You don't seem to get it through your head, Gertrude, that I simply haven't got the money to live as we're living. We've just got to pull up short, and I know you'll help me through."

Mrs. Warrenner came up to her husband, and he remarked with unusual perception how her eyes had changed. They narrowed; the gray of the iris seemed shot through with black; they menaced. The infantine loveliness of her face had altered to a terrible beauty.

"Look at me!" she said, defiantly, a strength in her voice that made him tingle. "I'm pretty enough for you, I guess, aren't I? Well, I've brought you along this far, George Warrenner, and I'm not going back one step; *not one step.*"

The following day McAllister had occasion to go to New York, and, after obligingly piloting Mrs. Warrenner to one or two automobile dealers, he put her on the ferry and went in to 22 Pine Street to have a look at Warrenner in his new N. E. W. offices. Bellamy had already honored the treasurer of N. E. W. with several cheerful visits, and every time he called, the importance of his presence represented so much clear

gold to Warrener. The indolent brother-in-law, in Warrener's eyes overdressed and affected, made no such personal impression as did Bellamy. Still, Warrener knew that the name counted. McAllister said, naturally:

"I've been all about with your wife this afternoon looking for an automobile. I think she's just about found what you want; but she'll tell you the particulars to-night. I've come in to talk a bit about N. E. W., if you have the time. My brother tells me it's a very big thing. May I, then, keep you for half an hour or so, Warrener?"

Drudge, tool, victim, that he was, completely unconscious of the part this man played in his distress, he nevertheless to-day took affront at McAllister's existence. His appearance, his income, his freedom from the care and tragedy lack of funds represents, his nonchalant hauteur and his inbred politeness, galled and annoyed the overstrained man.

McAllister could give a woman anything in the world she wanted. If his wife, deprived of elegancies and luxuries, ever compared herself with Mrs. Bellamy, it was no wonder she felt the contrast. As McAllister took his cigarette case from his pocket and offered it, it was refused a little brusquely; and throughout the conversation that followed, productive of enormous advantage to Warrener, his attitude was hostile. All that he said regarding the visit to Gertrude that night when he went home was:

"Bellamy's brother was in to-day. He says you've seen the automobile you like, little girl."

### CHAPTER XXIII.

It was mid-August. Slocum sizzled in the nineties. Mrs. Bellamy, languidly waving a fan, lay in a reclining chair on the shady side of her porch, a table with iced drinks by her side. Fanny, well-nigh as divested of clothes as a little savage, her hair knotted on the top of her head, beads of perspira-

tion on her neck and arms, sat on a stool humming a French lullaby to her doll.

"Fanny"—her mother's indolence was abruptly broken—"run and say to Parker that I'm not at home. Quickly, dearest!"

But the warning was too late, for the visitor, the flash of whose dress Mrs. Bellamy had perceived in the distance, had also seen Mrs. Bellamy, and she came assuredly around the side of the house and mounted the piazza steps before the lady could do more than slightly touch her hair to a show of order.

In the woman who advanced, who shook the offered hand as indifferently as it was extended, and seated herself in the wicker chair opposite Mrs. Bellamy, the hostess saw with understanding and consternation the change the last months had effected. She was—in Mrs. Bellamy's eyes—horribly and wonderfully altered. A remembrance of the first visit coming forcibly, she compared, first with disgust and then with pity, the present Mrs. Warrener with the awkward provincial whose acquaintance she had originally made. If conventionality of dress, good taste, expensiveness, had been required to bring beauty into relief, at all events that beauty was now evident to Mrs. Bellamy. Under a straw hat, whose crown was encircled by a mass of pale pink tissue, Mrs. Warrener's face was pale and cold, her delicate complexion unreddened by the heat, as exquisite as the tint of the hat trimming that floated around her head like the streamers of a veil. Her gray eyes vividly pointed with black in the iris, the lashes cut in straight, black lines along her heavy lids, her bright lips gave the only color to her face. Her hair was a direct copy of Mrs. Bellamy's. In long gloves of undressed kid that reached to the elbow, and dress of lace and embroidery, she presented the appearance of a worldling in the correctest form that could be demanded, and it only remained for her to open her lips—Mrs. Bellamy knew this—for the impression of her good breeding to be dispelled.

Gertrude had heard that they were

going away to-morrow. She had come to say good-by.

"Yes, we are going to Newport."

Mrs. Warrener sipped her iced tea daintily.

"I tell George he ought to take *me* to Newport. It must be lovely there."

Mrs. Bellamy quickly assured her:

"Oh, I don't think you would like it! It's dull unless you know a great many people."

"I rode up," vouchsafed the visitor, "in our automobile. George bought it for me just before you went away this spring."

"Yes?" Her hostess took up this information with less icy interest. "My brother tells me he went with you to help you choose it."

The faintest tremor of Mrs. Warrener's lids was the only sign that the brother's existence was of importance to her.

"George don't know anything about machines."

With a something like quick acerbity Mrs. Bellamy took his defense.

"My husband tells me Mr. Warrener is *very* clever in his own affairs. He finds him *quite* remarkable. I understand that his interest in the West is successful."

The wife said, keenly:

"What George needs is influence; he never did know how to make friends or push himself on. He'd be all right if he only knew a few more rich people. Slocum can't help him any. If it wasn't for me, he'd be in Grand Street today."

She rose. She had grown very miserable. McAllister failed to come, as she had hoped he would, to see her in her new dress, but she had no excuse for lingering longer, and she made her adieux, leaving more in her enemy's hands than she had ever imagined that enemy could control.

A little later McAllister came round the piazza, to find his sister sitting as the visitor had left her. He bent down and kissed her affectionately.

"This American heat is too much for

you, Agnes. I'm glad you're getting off to-morrow."

Mrs. Bellamy put up her hand and took one of her brother's.

"Sit down here with me for a little, won't you? John won't be out for another half hour. He's doing up a lot of last things in New York. Mrs. Warrener's just left. Did you see her?"

"For a second. She was in her automobile."

McAllister sat, as it were, against the sunset. In the front of the house spread the lawn, green and fresh under a sprinkler sending out its spray of fine, cool drops. Behind the young man's dark, sleek head the horizon was a band of color hot and bright. He continued: "She looked extremely well, didn't she? It's astounding how clothes and prosperity tell."

"Prosperity!" echoed his sister. "Paul!"

"Well?" McAllister's voice sharpened itself like a tool for the fray. "What does that exclamation mean?"

"Warrener could not in ten years have made enough money to pay for those clothes and those jewels."

McAllister's head leaned against the porch column, thrown a little back. His sister watched his face. It darkened.

"You don't know what you are talking about, Agnes! Do you know how much Warrener makes, or what his income is? It isn't like you to create a scandal, and, above all, in a town like——"

"Stop just there! Scandal in a town where we were born," she said, in a low tone; "in a town where we were children, and where we are so distinctly *the people*, the cynosures—— But never mind that part of the question—— although it's a good one! Mrs. Warrener's nothing to me. Her character and nature are too common and depraved for me to be interested in her. Some one else would have come along if you hadn't, I believe that; she was ready for anything. But you *did* come along—and I'm not a prude, Paul——"

She was entirely surprised that he did not silence her and fling out of her

presence. She went on, rather incoherently:

"But what you have done disgusts and troubles me. You have completed the depravity of the woman, and you are ruining the man."

He came over and stood in front of his sister. Even his eyes were pale. She waited nervously for his speech, which was characteristic and masculine. He laughed.

"It is absurd to be angry with you. You have imagined this situation, and will, I suppose, believe it. There's not one word of truth in what you say."

She laughed hysterically.

"Oh, of course! That's gallantry. If there isn't a word of truth in what I say, then come to-morrow with me to Newport."

"And run away?" he smiled.

"That's it—run away! Your words prove your interest. Yes, run away from her."

"No, from Slocum and all the midsummer gayeties! Nonsense!" he exclaimed. "You do need a change, my dear girl, you are growing provincial. I've been looking forward to the fun of having this house to myself and a little bachelor spree."

Mrs. Bellamy leaned forward in her chair, and said, pleadingly:

"Don't be cynical and impossible. I don't ask you to realize—I suppose you can't, if that woman fascinates you. I don't ask you to do anything—just to come away. That poor Warrener!"

"What's the trouble with him?"

"She will ruin him. She is ruining him. And to think he came to us as friends! We are in a horrible way responsible. I blame myself. You saw her to-day, you say? Well, her dress, her hat, her whole *ténue* are extraordinary. What do you suppose the Slocum people think?"

McAllister laughed.

"They probably agree with us that she never looked so well in her life."

He went into the house, and came out presently with a lighted cigar and, throwing himself down in the chair his sister had left, stretched himself indolently out.

Believing that she had made no impression, irritated at his *sang-froid*, Mrs. Bellamy walked to and fro trailing her long, soft negligée along the porch. He smoked a few moments, and then said:

"You will make yourself very unhappy, Agnes, if you take other people's morals so on your conscience. Now let me tell you something, since you seem calmer, in justice to the poor little woman whom you so misunderstand—you haven't spared your insinuations. Her toilet, her jewels, have all been bought by her husband."

"But it is impossible, Paul!"

McAllister knocked off the ash of his cigar.

"There is no reason why a man in these times shouldn't be rich at any moment, especially if he is in with the N. E. W. I was so entirely convinced of its value, that I have asked Warrener to place funds of mine in the company."

He spoke slowly and looked steadily at his sister.

"The fact of my confidence in him and his scheme, the fact of his old employer's confidence and the money we have put up, have enabled him to accept the position of trust and importance. He has, as you know, been treasurer of the N. E. W. for months past."

Mrs. Bellamy thought she saw a vulgar restitution; a sop flung to a dog to quiet him; hush money to a man who would not dare open his mouth! Then George Warrener's stolid, commonplace face came to her mind.

No, he knew nothing, nothing; would never suspect. He hadn't been paid, he had been rewarded; he hadn't been rewarded, he had received a reparation sum from a man whose conscience was not at peace.

McAllister spoke:

"His wife doesn't know this, and John doesn't know of my interest in N. E. W. Please don't speak of it to anyone. I tell you simply that you may understand that Warrener is quite in a position to buy luxuries for himself and his family. His company's stock has gone up fifteen points since it was



put on the market, and he has a salary of twelve thousand. He's on the way of being a rich man. If it hadn't been for us he would still be mewed up there in Grand Street on a salary of two thousand dollars a year. Now he can, if he has sense enough, take his place in the world. In short, my dear Agnes, since you have forced me to say it, I have—with Harkweather—made Warrener."

Mrs. Bellamy said, slowly:

"For his wife to ruin!"

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

Mrs. Warrener expected McAllister at four o'clock to tea, and toward the hour of the rendezvous sat waiting for him on the porch, when the postman, jaded in the extreme heat, came up the steps and handed her a letter.

Her correspondence with McAllister had been null—one or two conventional notes, a letter never—and this one as she opened it appeared instantly to be important. As she touched it something told her that it was a final thing, that it represented the last phase, and, after a pilgrimage to the clouds, she was once again on the dreary, commonplace earth. In the most cordial, friendly language he informed her that he was off to Newport for a breath of fresh air, that he wished he might chance to see her there, but could hardly hope for such good luck. He gave her no address, set no time for a return; made no personal reflections as to their past. It could not be called a goodbye, yet she read it one. It could not be called, strictly speaking, a sundering of relations; nevertheless, she understood in a flash that such was the case.

She could not believe her senses. The blood in her head and around her heart congealed. Inert she sat in the rocking-chair, the letter fallen upon her knees. Before the rush of diverse feelings could pour upon her like hosts over a field of war—for she was now able to feel, her experiences had rendered her sentient, if her brain was limited—fury against Mrs. Bellamy was

the first conscious sensation. It was she who had done this—forced her brother to leave Slocum; but with the reasonable thought that no woman could make a man leave another woman unless he is willing, her anger turned at once to McAllister himself.

No, George was probably at the bottom of it all. If she had been free, no doubt Mr. McAllister would have married her—he loved her enough. The Bellamys liked George so much that they had worked on McAllister until he was ready to sever rather than to prolong the deceit. This appeared reasonable to her, and with certain relief her anger veered from her lover and centered definitely around Mrs. Bellamy and George.

For months she had lived in an atmosphere so foreign, so delightful, so personal and secret, that she had fed and slept in surroundings that annihilated Slocum and its existence. In the short space of time between receiving the letter and opening it everything had been transformed. She was in Slocum now, and of the old things once more. She fell back in the chair with an inaudible cry.

"I won't stand it," she whispered. "He's got to come back to me."

She spent the rest of the three days in recalling, as far as she could, word for word all that had passed between them. It kept her in a stupor of musing; in a state of abstraction from which nothing roused her. She lay, half dressed, in her room, the coolest spot in the house, and with the practical minuteness of an accurate mind and good memory relived her past. Relived it not as a woman from whom love has been torn, but as a miser who, robbed, revisits his treasure house, turning inside out each empty sack to see if some hidden store will not mend his loss. She could finally remember nothing that gave her a right to send for him, nothing with which to force him to return.

Face to face with her worn, absent-minded husband, who, more than ever absorbed in his affairs, shut himself in his library and smoked far into the

night, she pursued her train of thought undisturbed. As she had not renounced McAllister even in her mind, her climax of revolt had not yet been reached; she was scheming how to see him, for she had reason to believe that her charm counted still, and that she could, as she put it to herself, "bring him round."

Her plans were fully made by the time her husband came sufficiently out of his abstraction to remark his wife's pallor. She kept her bed a day or two with little recourse to ruse, for she was really ill, and when the doctor whom George insisted should be called for her came, he ordered her peremptorily away. Warrener could not then by any possibility take his vacation, but he aided his wife to choose a place, and she managed so well that it was he who finally decided for Narragansett. He went with her at the week's end and installed her in a big hotel, her head full of plans and projects, her trunks full of pretty clothes, and a heart utterly void of any interest in the man who, with a crowd of other workers, took the Monday boat for New York, his eyes fixed on the pretty figure she made, under her pink parasol, as she stood and waved him good-by from the end of the pier.

## CHAPTER XXV.

Knowing that McAllister was separated from her by only a few miles, with the hated Slocum wiped for the present off the face of the map, Mrs. Warrener relaxed, and in the first few days after her husband left took no steps toward making her whereabouts known.

She rose late, and just before luncheon went downstairs to watch the people: If she studied the human crowd to any other purpose than to admire their clothes, jewels and the parade of bad fashion and careless manners, it was not evinced by her. But she herself was constantly remarked, was conscious of it; saw admiration in many eyes, and heard, in half-caught remarks, that her coloring, her hair, eyes

and figure had attraction for other men besides the one who was unfaithful to her. She was especially singled out by a gentleman who dined at her hotel, and she knew that on the slightest provocation he would speak to her.

Toward the end of the fourth day of her stay, she followed the promenade close to the sea, where along the waters ran a mesh of light, one after another linked chains of sunlight slipping and breaking, drifting out to sea. Further away lay the yachts at anchor, white and black boats on a golden sky. She could hear the bright, gay music of the Hungarian band from the Casino—music to which she had already listened once or twice; troubled by its sensuous, voluptuous harmonies, combined with her memories and her sense of desertion, she had been brought near to real suffering.

She had found the name of the Bel-lamys' villa in the telephone book. Up till now, resentful of her inability to cope with the situation, she had not written him, but to-night her loneliness reached a crisis; moreover, she had come to the end of her memories, she had nothing more to think about, and she couldn't stand it another day. She decided to write at once, and as she turned, animated by this decision, she came face to face with a man who had observed her at her hotel. He lifted his hat with great politeness, but said nothing, as her look of anger and displeasure plainly told him his advances would be more than ill-placed.

Her letter, brought to McAllister by a special messenger, was unwelcome as a missive could be. At once naïve and commanding, it was also appealing, because in it she was so powerless. She descended to the last plane when she said that if he did not come to her, she would go after him to Newport.

The end of the fourth day he went across the bay to Narragansett. He had no appointment with her. She was not at her hotel; he learned that she was still in the village. Half aimlessly and already relieved that he had sincerely tried and failed, he wandered among the throng of gayly dressed people,

finally strolling into the Casino to find music, coolness and something to drink.

He had finished his cigarette and a cocktail when the dress of a woman at a small table near caught his attention—a graceful gown of muslin, over whose white expanse floated the ends of a pale blue scarf. Her back was toward him; she was not alone. Her companion, a man with a pointed beard, leaned eagerly across the table talking to her. The woman's figure was familiar. McAllister was about to rise and slip out of the place unseen, when, as if she had felt his presence, she slowly turned around, started violently and almost cried out. He had scarcely time to rise before she had left her place and come quickly over to him.

"I came to see you," he said, "after your note, but don't let me take you, by any means, from your friend."

He thought she was going to faint, she turned so white, as she murmured:

"Don't be mean to me! He isn't my friend. I never saw him before."

"We can't stay here," said McAllister, impatiently.

He could not have come up at a worse moment for Mrs. Warren. Annoyed at being discovered in the company of another man, who that very moment had seated himself before her, and with whom she had not exchanged half a dozen words, the little aplomb she possessed was gone. McAllister's attitude was perfectly polite, and that was all that could be said about it. The new man she saw in him awed her. She said, petulantly:

"Well, you took long enough to come over, anyhow. It's three days since I wrote you."

Nevertheless, the fact of his having come at all, she thought, gave her a victory.

She piloted him quickly, almost cheerfully, from the Casino to her hotel, and McAllister, on whom the presence of the man with her had left an irrevocable disgust, felt himself more out of *rapproch* than he had even hoped to be.

"I knew," she said, when they were at the end of a long row of gaudy par-

lors, seated together in the hotel, "that you hadn't gone away for good."

There was no disturbance on her face.

"I was awfully angry at your letter. It made me sick, too. I didn't see how I was going to get along without you, so I came up here."

"Are you here alone?"

"George brought me, but he went back again."

"Who was that man with you?"

Mrs. Warren's face had an appealing expression as she said, frankly:

"He's been hanging around me for days. I'm always meeting him. I don't even know his name. I never looked at him until to-day. Then I thought you weren't coming, and that it didn't make any difference what I did."

"So you spoke to him?"

She exclaimed, indignantly:

"I didn't! He came over just as you came in and sat down there. He hadn't said more than three words to me."

Before McAllister could follow the suspicions she imagined him to have, she said:

"If you care what I do, you oughtn't to have left me like that!"

She expected a reply. But McAllister sat back without making one, his eyes uneasily on the doors between the two salons.

"I guess Mrs. Bellamy made you go away from Slocum," she pursued.

"Your sister hates me."

But before she could continue, her companion said, decidedly:

"I went of my own accord."

He spoke of the difference in their lives, which made it natural that they should be separated; of his short stay in this country—he was going back to Europe in a few weeks—he didn't dare let himself get any fonder of her; he had no regrets except for her. He knew, of course, that she would soon grow to hate him, but he must bear that; they must be practical and look at it in the right light. He finished with:

"Everything that's delightful comes to an end, you know, and our friendship couldn't go on indefinitely."

She interrupted him, sharply:

"Why not?"

At this naïve frankness, he said:

"Why, how could it? For your sake, above all, we must separate."

"Yes, it can go on," she slowly decided. "You can marry me. I can get a divorce from George. He'd let me. He cares more for N. E. W. than he does for me."

McAllister's rôle, however *lâche*, did not comprehend that he should teach her her duty to her husband. But he could not but remark the sequence of sacrifices she indicated to be made by poor Warrenner, and he quite believed that, confronted with the story of his wife's love for another man, her husband would give her freedom as the last of all his gifts. He smiled, as though he took what she said as a pleasantry.

"Of course you're not serious?"

"Yes, I am, too. I'm not going back to that awful Slocum life and George. I was all right enough before you came, but I can't bear the sight of George any more, or Slocum, either. And you can't just throw me over like that; you can't do it!"

The menace, uncongenial as it was, was mild in its effect compared to the suggestion of a fetter that the word implied. She couldn't more completely have disenchanted him than by her intimation of a chain, but even her vulgarity would not permit McAllister, as he freed himself, to cut her mercilessly, as many a man would have not scrupled to do.

"I can't believe you're serious, however. Even if I loved a woman better than anything else in the world, I would hesitate to do what you ask. It would ruin Warrenner completely. I can't do that."

She laughed, a hard little sound.

"That's the first time you've ever thought of George. It's too late!"

He let this pass. She had grown very pale. Her lips quivered. The tears came, and she let them fall, and between her sobs poured forth a storm of reproaches that, limited, pent up, as she was, ignorant of phrase, of language to

charm, had unusual force and poignancy, and could not have left any man unmoved. He did not attempt to comfort her, and, disturbed and uncomfortable, waited for her to weep and reproach him as long as she would. But when she ceased, his first words were cruel enough.

"I must go. There's only one boat more to-night, and I shall have to run to make it."

At his words she realized that she had lost him, and sprang up—for he had risen—seized him by the arm and drew him over to the window and clung to him in the shadow. Between the catching breaths of her loud sobs she said:

"You made me think you liked me. It's your fault now what becomes of me. If you leave me I'll speak to this other man here to-night. I'll go off with him just as soon as you have gone over to Newport."

The small, petulant face, so pretty and so vain, was tense now and almost grave. Her infantile inconsequence had all disappeared. McAllister looked down at his work; his sister's assertion that Gertrude was depraved before he had come did not occur to him. She said, pathetically:

"I guess I'll never care for anything again."

And touched by this more than by anything she had said or done, flattered in his masculine vanity that it was in his power to make any woman happy, it was on his lips' edge to ask her:

"Do you really love me?"

Instead he said, more gently:

"What do you want me to do?"

Her tragic expression changed instantly.

"Why, stay now"—she had it clearly in her own mind. "Let's go away somewhere together—to Europe. George will get a divorce."

George—dupe, tool, poor, common, sordid man—and the other man who had leaned to her across the table when McAllister had first seen her to-day, and himself—all in one class.

A clock in the room struck six. Mc-

Allister had only five minutes in which to make his boat. Half calm, tearless and wholly pretty, she was holding him. With a gentleness, even in the ungracious act, more tender than he had ever shown, he tried to disengage her arm, but she flung both around his neck and held him passionately. Anyone passing by might have seen them, but no one came near the stuffy little room. McAllister's voice shook as he made himself definitely free.

"There," he said, "be good—don't do anything silly or rash. I must go. I'll write to-morrow surely, or come to—"

He got away and dashed like mad for his boat, which he just made. Once on board, he stood far up in the bow, leaning against the stiff beating of the wind, as if it were a force whose resistance could not measure his own. The dark blue waves coming up around the keel, the paling, ineffable distance of the sky, possessed unusual beauty for him, sensitive as he was in his intensest moods to nature. The fresh air, the vigor and delight of it, laid its soothing touch upon his excitement. He could feel the lips of the woman he had left, and her hands clinging to his arm. If he had missed his boat he would have stayed with her and irrevocably. But *he had not missed it*. It was, on the contrary, carrying him through the breaking waters. Its trail out into the blue was fate, and it lay behind him. No half promise, wrung from him, could bind him; no relenting nor pity—he was free.

A man he knew came up and startled him with his greeting:

"I say, what have you been doing over in Narragansett? You look as if you had been playing for high stakes. Did you lose?"

"No," said McAllister; "I won."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

The following day she waited hour after hour for McAllister. By nighttime, when every boat and every mail was in, and no word had come from

him, she even then could not believe herself deserted.

Not until the hour she spent in the dining room, before a table whose mixed menu offered her nothing she could find appetite to eat, did she remark that McAllister was not the only man who had failed in his attentions to her. She remembered suddenly that her husband had not written to her for three or four days. In her absorption she had been quite oblivious to this, but now, as she feed the waiter from her little gold purse, she realized that she was in need of more money. She would have just about enough to pay her hotel bill. An installment should certainly have come for her by the night's mail. She also saw that the table where the gentleman who observed her with so much interest usually sat was empty. As the colored waiter put her finger bowl before her, she asked:

"Is that gentleman gone?"

It seemed he had left by the last night's boat.

Little as he was to her, this defection made her desolation complete.

She telephoned to George in Slocum, and found that he was in New York, and she left word for him to call her up as soon as he returned; meanwhile she sent him a telegram to his office, asking him to wire her money.

She telephoned to the Bellamy villa on the next day at noon, to learn that Mr. McAllister was out, and spent the following hours filling sheet after sheet of hotel paper in a letter to him, which she sent by private messenger to Newport. Later in the afternoon the man returned, bringing the note back again, with word that the gentleman had left Newport, and no address had been given.

She had now no thought but to get away from the horrible place, whose gayeties and worldliness maddened her. It seemed that everything must be better when she got down to the city. With the optimism of a selfishness that refuses to suffer when it can push the bugbear behind the curtain, she refused to let herself dwell on her desertion.

She *would* see him again in some way or other, and she left Narragansett by the night boat for New York.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

Mrs. Warrenner reached Slocum on one of those days of heat when the flesh shrinks before the contact of the air and the foot hesitates to touch the pavement. After the breeze of the sea-coast the inland atmosphere fell like a blight.

Gertrude drove up to Hillside Avenue in a hack from the station. At George's office she had learned that her husband had not been in New York for two days, and she supposed him to be laid up with the heat, and that she would find him at the house. His delinquency in the forwarding of the money was the sole inconvenience his silence had caused his wife.

George would be glad to see her, anyway! He belonged to her. He couldn't get away and leave her in the lurch, even if he wanted to, and there was comfort in the knowledge. George had been repugnant to her for a long time, but he was a protection, a caretaker, and she repeated to herself with contemptuous satisfaction:

"He perfectly worships me."

Her humiliation, although unadmitted, cankered at her heart, and she turned to her husband with much the feeling of one who, after suffering all day in smart new boots, thinks with relief of the shabby, duntrodden slippers which, discarded and despised in the back of the shoe closet, offer comfort and relief.

At the back of her lawn her house greeted her, cool and agreeable. In spite of her distaste for Slocum, this which stood for home and its comforts was a welcome sight. She would take a bath and get cool and have some iced tea.

No one answered her ring at the bell, which she repeated, and as she waited several minutes a presentiment came to her for the first that all was not right. Unless he was asleep up-

stairs, George was not in the house, nor were the servants, either. As she left the piazza and went around to the back, the cheerful singing of an Irish voice reassured her. There in a hammock swung from the pillars of the servants' porch Katy was swaying to and fro. She sprang up at the sight of her mistress.

Mr. Warrenner had not come home. He had not been home for several days, but inside there was a letter for Mrs. Warrenner.

Gertrude followed the maid through the kitchen and front rooms to the parlor, shut in, dark and cool. Katy drew up one of the curtains and opened the window, and the bright, heavy heat came sweeping in on a humid wave. The letter bore George's handwriting. His wife turned it over in her hand, afraid at first to open it. If, in the muddle of bewilderment her mind was becoming, in which Slocum, the heat and the shrill cries of the children playing in the streets mingled, anything was clear, it was a fear that George had found out all about McAllister and had left her. *If George had left her!* How nervous and silly she was! Why, he'd only gone off to the oil wells. When she had read the letter the room swam around her.

Katy from the next room saw her mistress sway and fall before she could run to her assistance.

Scarcely sympathetic and wholly alarmed, the maid rendered Mrs. Warrenner what aid she could, and when, after a few moments of kind unconsciousness, Gertrude came out of her syncope, Katy urged her to let her telephone for the doctor.

Through the flood of tears that shook her, although Mrs. Warrenner would have rather shed her blood than weep before this girl, she said:

"Ring up Mrs. Turnbull—77 A Elm."

When she was alone in her room, she reopened her letter; its miserable scrawl, its poor pitiful writing, danced before her eyes:

I don't know how to tell you, Gert, but it's all up with us—with me, at any rate. I



couldn't keep up the speed as I wanted to, and when I found myself going under I borrowed money that wasn't mine. The time's come for me to make it good, and I haven't a red cent to my name. How can you ever get along? What will you do? That's about all I think of. Of course you can't forgive me, Gertie. I wanted to give you the best of everything, and I've only disgraced you and ruined you. I can't expect you to forgive me. I couldn't blame you for throwing me over. Nobody knows about it yet. The books won't be open till Friday, and I've gone to Canada. Don't tell anyone till it's all out. And send me a wire to Fred Ward, Rummage's Hotel, Montreal.

GEORGE.

The telephone summons brought Mary Turnbull, breathless and excited, some few minutes later. She was shown upstairs at once to Gertrude's room, where she lay on her sofa in a soft muslin wrapper whose flounces and ruffles rolled and billowed to the floor. Mary Turnbull came up to the sofa and knelt down and took Gertrude's face between her kindly hands.

"Say, Gertie, you're real sick, aren't you? What's the trouble, dear?"

Mrs. Warrener did not speak—she did not dare to. She scarcely dared to breathe. She wanted a human presence near her—anyone but Katy, whom she hated—and Mary Turnbull was the closest approach to a friend she had in Slocum. But even as this voice broke the silence which had been around her for days—broke in upon the silence in which she had lived ever since her disgrace and humiliation—she shrank and cringed. She supposed that Mary believed all kinds of horrid things about her, anyway, but she didn't know that she was a deserted and despised woman and the wife of a thief. A little color came across her pallor.

"Oh, it's nothing but a heat stroke, I guess. I came down from Narragansett to-day, and it was fearful in New York. I didn't have any parasol. When I got home I fainted, and Katy was frightened."

Mary Turnbull looked relieved.

"I thought something awful had happened. Where's George? Isn't he in yet?"

"No."

"Sent for the doctor?"

"No, I don't feel like seeing him. I'll be all right soon."

Mrs. Turnbull drew a chair close to the couch, and, after a few practical questions regarding Gertrude's illness, suggested some simple remedies. She had hitherto laid all Gertrude's moods to money, as she knew her own ups and downs to come from but one almighty cause. But as she saw her neighbor's pallor return, the haunted look in her eyes, as her questions about George revealed that he was out of town, her view of the case altered. With a very fair understanding of her townswoman's delinquencies, she flew to the conclusion that George, discovering his wife's infidelity, had left her. And she pitied her before judging her, a rare and, one might say, unfeminine thing to do. For a half hour or so she talked as impersonally as she could, then rose to go, saying that her husband would be home and dinner waiting. But at the thought of her desolate house and of all the things her visitor did not know, of the horrors that must close in upon her on every side, Gertrude's heart quailed, and she caught at Mary's dress.

"No, don't go! You won't leave me, Mary? I'll go crazy if you do—I will, honestly. I'm in terrible trouble. I don't know what to do. George—" She choked at her husband's name.

"There, Gertie, there," Mrs. Turnbull soothed. She sat down again and took Mrs. Warrener's cold hands.

"Tell me what's the matter, can't you? Perhaps it will comfort you."

She was completely alone, without five dollars in the house, incapable of acting for herself, or, indeed, of knowing what course to take. A dull, dreadful misery held her heart till it ached. The feelings that her husband's dishonesty had aroused were less profound than her anger at his ruin of her life. "He was nothing more than a common thief," and this judgment gave her strength to speak out in order that some one should tell her what to do.

"George has done a perfectly awful thing, Mary. And he's gone to Can-

ada. He's turned out to be a very wicked man."

Mrs. Turnbull looked perfectly bewildered.

"George? George Warrener wicked! Why, I don't believe it. He's as good as gold."

Gertrude wiped her eyes and found the letter by her side and gave it to her friend, watching her as she read. The good woman had never been so near to evil in her life. She crimsoned for Warrener's transgression as she read; she crimsoned still more deeply for the woman on whom, as she put the letter down, she turned the gravity of her honest eyes.

"You must go right away to your husband. You must get right up and dress, have some dinner, and go to New York and take the first train to Montreal."

"What for?" asked the wife.

Mrs. Turnbull was the more excited of the two. She repeated, tartly:

"What for? Gertrude Warrener! Why, how can you ask *me*? Why, to save George, of course. He's just about half off his head. Anybody can tell you that. Never mind what he's done. It isn't for *you* to judge him."

She looked keenly at the charming blond head, at the pretty, selfish face, where even grief had not left a softening trace.

"We all of us do wrong at times, and George Warrener never did a mean thing in his life before. You've got to help him brace up. Goodness! You'll know what to say fast enough when you get there. Let me tell the girl to fix you up some supper and get out your things."

Gertrude made no movement of assent. Her attitude, her appearance, the contour of her bare arm as the lace fell back from it, the pose of her blond head, the luxury and extravagance she represented, struck the elder woman of plainer tastes and simpler needs unpleasantly, and her voice was cold as she said:

"I oughtn't to advise you, Gertrude. Perhaps you've got other plans. But you sent for me——"

"I haven't got any plans, nor anywhere to go to, if that's what you mean. I haven't got five dollars in my pocket. George hasn't sent me any money for over a week. I suppose I'll have to give up all my things, my rings and everything."

"My lands!" offered Mrs. Turnbull, cordially. "I guess I can get you up to Canada all right."

If she didn't go to George, what *should* she do? Where should she go? To-morrow the papers would be full of the disgrace and the crime. Men were put in prison for less than that. She was the wife of a felon.

She cried out in a sharp tone:

"Oh, what did George do like this for! I can't ever hold my head up again. I never want to see him again."

Mary Turnbull's was not a large intelligence, nor considered very cultured or bright in her set, but she knew what to say to this wife as she sat down by her side, took her hands into hers and plead for George Warrener. Her simplicity and eloquence must have been fused with real inspiration, for Gertrude listened. When Mrs. Turnbull had ceased to speak, Mrs. Warrener got up from the sofa slowly, with great languor in her movements.

"I'll go," she said, colorlessly. "I haven't got anything else left to do. If they send George to prison, I don't suppose anybody in Slocum will ever speak to me again."

Her neighbor did not recall to her how little she had cared for or valued the esteem of her fellow townsmen; she did not give one feminine thrust. Quietly and adroitly she prepared the wife for her journey, packed her bag, made her eat, filled her purse with money which Katy was sent up to Elm Street to fetch. Gertrude submitted passively to the directions, and, with apparently no interest in the world, descended the stoop she had mounted not four hours before, and took the cab which waited for her at the curb. Mrs. Turnbull drove with her to the station, and would even have accompanied her to New York, but Gertrude preferred to go alone.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

On a corner of an inconspicuous street, in the older quarter of Montreal, Rummage's Hotel extends an indifferent hospitality—dingy, bare bedrooms, and spare, thoroughly English cookery—to guests who are for the most part *habitués*, and with whom the inn has no reputation to lose or to gain.

When a man with no luggage, other than a dress-suit case, straggled into the office on the arrival of the express from New York and registered as Fred Ward, from Chicago, the clerk thought him in the last stage of a drinking bout, and assigned him to an apartment at the top of the house, where he would not be likely to disturb other guests in the event of nightmare or boisterous behavior. But the traveler, throwing his valise down in the corner, his hat after it, dismissing the boy and locking himself in when alone, was not likely to become a troublesome guest. He wanted to sleep. For forty-eight hours he had not closed his hunted, dreadful eyes. Dressed as he was to his boots, he threw himself on his bed, buried his face in his arms, and after a few minutes during which his body quivered and shook, like a dog that has been beaten and flung out and shrinking, the man's form settled into quiet, and the active brain and suffering senses into heavy repose.

Warrener's dreams were cruel. He was walking on a stretch of white beach—one of those infinite sandy marshes that appear limitless and horizonless, to slip into the sea. Gertrude in the pink dress and picture hat walked by his side. He had grown young again, and she leaned on him with a dependence that made him proud as he dreamed. The sand was deep and clogging and dragged at his feet; the woman at his side flew along the beach, and to keep up with her he strained every muscle. Still, she did not carry him along with her; on the contrary, he was forced to carry and follow as well. Sweat poured from him like rain, his limbs ached. As he started

to run across the sinister beach he saw that his wife's dress had become silk and dazzling; she was alive with jewels like stars. She laughed and urged him on. As he staggered under her weight a thick darkness came down over him. The sand rose to his trembling knees, to his waist; when it should reach his mouth he knew it would suffocate him.

Suddenly the woman loosed his arm, and as she did so he was conscious that he had become free. She flew in front of him, her finery turned to foul and loathsome rags hanging on a body as foul as her tatters. Cold with horror, he tried to pursue her, and the sand became water that stole around his feet as the rising tide came swiftly, noiselessly in. The tossing waves obscured the flying figure of the woman, and before they reached Warrener's lips to choke his life out, his dream had changed. Dream after dream pursued him with repetitions of more recent scenes harrowing and threatening, till when he awoke, well on in the afternoon, it was with a cry and a start.

He sprang up wild-eyed. The heat and brilliance of red sunset poured into his attic room. He threw open the window for air and looked out over the roofs and chimneys of Montreal. Although he had not tasted food since leaving New York, he was conscious only of thirst, and rang for a pitcher of ice water. He sat down in his shirt sleeves in the open window, and began to try to find, as he mentally set to work retracing his acts of the last six months, an explanation of the immorality into which he had been betrayed. Nothing was as terrible, he had at first thought, as the state of disgrace he had forced upon his wife; but he found, as he reflected, that the personal shame, the severe judgment of himself by himself, was the keenest feeling alive in him. George Warrener, trusted all his life, honorable all his life, the son of honorable parents, the nephew of an upright, God-fearing man, suddenly a thief! That was the word for it—a common thief.

He had used part of McAllister's

funds to pay up his own heavy bills; with the rest he had purchased in his own name securities that promised a quicker, a more considerable rise than N. E. W., whose sure progression moved too slowly for a man who was rushing into fortune by fair means or foul. But his new investments were attacked by an antagonistic bill in the Senate, Warrener was wiped out. He did not hesitate to use Bellamy's money to recoup, bought on a larger margin and drew on the stock for his running expenses. His year's salary was already overdrawn, and his few shares in N. E. W. stood stationary in a fluctuating market, which finally, in the panic of September, carried all values far down the scales. Warrener was called upon for more margin. He had no more to give, and he was forced out of the market. Then as, penniless and uninvested, he watched N. E. W. slowly rise, rise, he saw the full horror of his disaster. Bellamy and McAllister, if properly invested, as they supposed themselves to be, should have made many thousands of dollars. *They did not own one share of stock.* The other moneys of his company he had not trifled with. They stood secure; if he had had time he might have manipulated them in a last maddened effort to retrieve his treachery, but he had not had time. The booming of the stock had called forth letters and telegrams from McAllister and Bellamy; the former wired he was coming down from Newport to New York, inquired if Warrener had sold, and made an appointment with him for Friday morning. Unskillful and unequal to cope with the consequences of his sin, planned and executed without any clever depravity behind it, the commonplace victim was terrified; he lost his nerve, his courage, his head. The accounts of McAllister and Bellamy would be opened on Friday, and on Monday Warrener gathered together a few hundred dollars and fled the city.

Since his departure the thought of his wife had been so poignant, so painful, that it was as though he wore her like a spiked cross on his naked flesh.

He bled at her name. Not once did it occur to him to blame her; only her feminine dependence on him, her prettiness, his possession, came to his mind. She had been his; he loved her, he would have given her the world and his heart under it; all he succeeded in doing was to ruin her life.

The pursuit of the law did not terrify him. He had fled in a moment of panic. He could not face his wife's disdain, her condemnation; he could not face his betrayed friends. He had no idea what he meant to do; until this moment in the quiet room of the foreign hotel he had not been able to consecutively think. He supposed Gertrude would get a divorce from him. Still, she might forgive him or speak kindly to him. It was not unheard of; other women had stood by their husbands. He drank a great draught from the pitcher of ice water, and stared out at the dying daylight that was gradually drawn into the heavens that closed gray and dismally after it.

If she didn't write to him he would kill himself. He didn't care anything about life if she went back on him. He wouldn't ask her to be a refugee, an exile with him, but he would have to have some word of kindness or pardon from her before he relinquished hope and home.

### CHAPTER XXX.

Mrs. Warrener's trip from New York was very different from her fugitive husband's. She had slept, and, before the train reached Montreal, she had faced as much as she understood of the situation and viewed the position from her own limited standpoint. To return to Slocum was impossible. They must go to some new country, to one of the lovely places McAllister had told her of. George's old Uncle Sampson would advance them money rather than have his nephew stay in the United States and be put in jail.

To go to George, to nothing but George, for the remainder of her life, was far from being the foundation of her intent. She was going to a man

who would take her away from a hateful past that caused her humiliation and anger every time she thought of it.

She did not directly contemplate a new betrayal of her husband; she saw only as far as the next step of her journey, nothing more; but she consoled herself when the defection of her lover most poignantly assailed her with the reflection: "Paul McAllister isn't the only man in the world!"

In this spirit she came to her husband.

As his wife opened the door of his sixth-floor room, George started up from his seat by the window with a cry. Bowed over and bent like an old man, as he crossed the floor, he had the look of coming to her on his knees.

"My God—Gert!"

As if afraid she would not take it, he half extended a trembling hand. Gertrude was not prepared for the sight her husband presented. He could not now have been lost in a crowd because of his commonplaceness. Tragedy had at last given him a distinction, and a dreadful one. His face, unwashed and unshaven, bore on the sunken cheeks the marks of tears, his eyes were red and his lips seamed and black. He put his hand up to his uncertain lips and his disordered hair.

"I never thought you'd come up here to Montreal! I thought you'd wire or write."

"Well, you look perfectly awful, George. I guess you haven't had a shave for days, or a bath, either! And you smell like whisky. Have you been drinking?"

The apparition his wife made, sweet and cool and indifferent, the white veil fluttering over her shoulders, was a refreshing and wonderful sight to the deserted man. The crises and the duties of life appeared to make upon her no impression. She was undisturbed, to all intents and purposes, but her tangible presence was more of good fortune than he had supposed ever to see again. Life wasn't all up with him, then, or all lost. His wife was in the world,

and she cared enough to follow him into disgrace.

"I don't know what I've done since I landed here, Gert. It's all a sort of hell back of me. I've got some clean things in my suit case. I'll wash up and put them on."

She walked over to the window where George had been sitting and looked out at the new city. She wasn't going to be the first to speak of what he had done. The disgust of her position and the man made her suddenly sullen and silent. The excitement of her journey had worn off. If this were "a foreign city," it was ugly enough! Here she was alone with a poor, pitiful creature who, instead of being something to lean on, clung to her. Despair and revolt surged up in her heart more overwhelmingly than had ever her passion for McAllister. Why had she come? What a fool she was! Why had she listened to Mary Turnbull? It was all her fault! George, who felt that any greeting, no matter how frigid, was just, began at once to think for her comfort.

"I'll look after a better room right away. This isn't fit for you. They put me in here the night I came. I didn't care where I went. They'll have to fix us up now."

She shrugged indifferently, and stood tapping the side of the window with her fingers. Warrener was as little equal as his wife to the situation that required words. Half grateful that she had no blame for him, and, on the other hand, missing the relief that it would have been to see her honest horror of what he had done, he thought for a moment that she felt herself as culpable as he, and that she saw the ruin of their lives in the right light. But, as she turned about and faced him—for it annoyed her to have him standing speechless by her side—her irritation was evident and implied to him a more serious breach than a passing mood of ill humor. His heart sank and his voice was sick with despair.

"I see you're not going to forgive me, Gertie. I don't blame you. I've got a few hundred dollars here with me. You

can have them. I don't care a damn what becomes of me. It will be easy enough for you to get a divorce."

He was so ruined, even though he had straightened up a little and his face had begun to humanize, that she despaired of him as an aid in her new plans. Her tone was grudging. She said, slowly:

"What would I have come all the way up from Slocum for if I'd been going to get a divorce?"

But even this meager concession was too much for Warrenner's overstrained nerves. He made a deep exclamation containing an expression of his misery and his gratitude and caught his wife in his arms with a force she had not known in him. His embrace was so passionate and possessive that she was overpowered. He nearly suffocated her, and she wrenched herself free from him at last by force. He murmured:

"You're good as gold. You're a brick. You're the finest woman out." He did not know what he said. "I'll make it all up to you somehow. I'll get on my feet again. You're the best woman in the world."

As he trembled before her, maudlin from excitement and stimulant, and the image of McAllister rose in her mind and all she had lost with him, a loathing of her husband and a terror of him made her almost scream:

"Don't touch me, George!"

"No, no. I won't, Gertie! I know I'm not fit to touch your boots."

His words penetrated her. If he *knew*, he couldn't think so well of her. He would not call her the best woman in the world. If she told him right out frankly, he would set her free—want her to go—and he couldn't blame her when he had done so much worse himself. It was on her lips to speak when her husband, who had pulled himself together, said, more sanely:

"Nobody knows it yet but you. I ran away in a panic. I couldn't stand seeing those men, and I've been thinking it all out since I've been here. I'll go down to New York and make a clean breast of it. I've always been straight before, and perhaps Bellamy and McAllister—"

Mrs. Warrenner caught at the name.

"*Mr. McAllister!*"

She repeated it so sharply that Warrenner looked in surprise.

"You didn't know it? He didn't want me to say anything about it. Why, Bellamy and McAllister put a lot of money in N. E. W., and it was that money I used. McAllister is the biggest loser. He thinks he has made a good profit this month, and that I sold him out on the rise."

Warrenner's explanation was business-like, the familiar formulas coming as readily to his lips as though beneath them were not underlying fraud.

But his wife's visage convulsed. She leaned forward to him, her chin extended, and said:

"You cheated Mr. McAllister out of his money? Is it *Mr. McAllister* you're running away from?"

Irritated at the repetition on the name and sore at the pressing of his wrong at the sensitive point, her husband said impatiently:

"Well, I don't see how he's any better than Bellamy."

Gertrude's breath came and went quickly, her eyes lurid and her expression so singular that it aroused suspicion in her husband.

"What's the matter with you? What in thunder is he to you?"

"He isn't anything," she said, sullenly.

McAllister cheated out of the money he had paid in for her use! The humor, the horrible humor, of it, didn't strike her, but the peculiar double dishonor did. McAllister would think they were both in league; perhaps he already suspected her. He would think that she had urged this act. At any rate, if she told George about him now he would certainly cast her off. She could never look McAllister in the face again. The humiliation of the Bellamys' judgment and criticism, the Slocum gossip and condemnation, seemed to approach her like a menacing fire. She never wanted to feel that scorching flame. With George or without him, she must get far away.

"I hate them all!" she cried, with



suppressed passion. "The Bellamys and McAllister, too. They're all stuck up and proud, I've told you so already, but they're awfully prominent, and everybody will be down on me in Slo-cum now."

His heart smote him at the sight of the first tears that came into her eyes across their angry fire.

"If you go and ask favors of that man and of those people I'll never speak to you again! I'm going away to-morrow to Europe or somewhere. I've got all my jewelry with me. I can sell it. You can take your choice. If you want to go back and eat humble pie you can go back alone, George Warrener, and if you want to go with me, why, you'd better say so right now."

He said so, and that he would go wherever she liked; they would do whatever they could together. She stood before him a visible temptation, to which he yielded with new remorse and shame.

#### CHAPTER XXXI.

It was ten o'clock when, bathed, shaved and dressed with care, he went to his room, which he entered gently, not to disturb his wife, who had gone early to bed. Gertrude's coming had loosed the tension of his nerves, but he was still keyed to a dangerous pitch.

The door between their rooms was half ajar. Warrener pushed it open softly. He wanted to look at his wife before he tried to sleep. She was lying quietly, worn out, poor thing, with her anxiety and her long journey to him. She had had a bad headache when she went to bed, and had taken a narcotic, and it held her safe and sound. His unselfishness would not let him disturb her. In the heat the covering over her was light. The long, slender shape of her body outlined itself under the sheet. The ruffles of her nightdress fell back from her bare arms. She breathed quietly, her lips a little parted. His heart swelled with affection and gratitude to the woman who had sought him like this, and he was well-nigh irresistibly drawn to her, but he could not

disturb that fortunate rest. In the half darkness, his foot touched something on the floor. It was a letter, and he stooped and picked it up and noiselessly regained his own room.

The letter was a thick one in a hotel envelope bearing the stamp of the Ocean House, Narragansett. It was addressed in his wife's hand to Paul McAllister. What had Gertrude written to him for? The sight of the address gave her husband so much surprise that it took him entirely out of himself. He thought at first that the letter had been written while he was downstairs—perhaps it was a solicitation of clemency for him? But in that case it would not have read "By Private Messenger, Newport, The Rocks." The envelope was a little soiled. Its appearance and the fact that it bore the name of the man he had defrauded troubled and bewildered George. He remembered at once Gertrude's emotion at McAllister's name that afternoon. What had she to say to this man who was at once enemy and friend?

Warrener broke the seal and drew the letter out of the envelope. It took him a long time to read the pages of closely written paper. He read them all through, then started forward with them in his hand to his wife's room, then returned to slowly read the letter through once more.

In her last appeal to her lover Gertrude had prodigaled everything she knew of endearment and all she had of passion. She recalled their hours together. She begged him to send for her, to come to her; to take her away from George, whom she hated. She would be ready at a moment's notice. It was the desperate appeal of a deserted woman to her lover; written without restraint, and for no eyes but his—certainly never meant to fall into her husband's hands. Warrener trembled so violently where he stood that with difficulty he kept his feet. A blindness came over him, and a coldness that crept up from his heart like a frozen mist. The electric lights seemed to go out and then to blaze again with painful brightness. He started to wipe his

forehead with his hand, the hand that held the letter. He dropped it like a hot coal, the paper scattered to the floor. He started to his wife's room, and at the bed he drew himself up short. What did he mean to do? What was he at her side for?

"There's only one way out of this," he thought. "Death."

He stood at her side, clinching and unclenching his hands. He could not believe that the exhausted body had it left in it to suffer like this. But it did not occur to him to kill her. *This* was what he had slaved and toiled for with the first years of his manhood, with his youth! *This* for which he had committed crime and betrayed—well, whom had he betrayed? Her lover. McAllister had paid for the woman to her husband. McAllister—ah! Warrener strangled back a laugh between his teeth; he had a right to *that* man's money, anyway! He had ruined himself to keep this corrupt and lovely body dressed and fed and jeweled, while another man profited by her beauty. She wasn't his; no, he saw it now! She had never been his. Words such as he had read in the letter had never been said by her to him. She had never loved him; she had written it there in the letter to McAllister that *she hated him*. How blind and dull he was to have ignored it all these years! *She hated him*. He couldn't forget how that looked written. He had lived with her, slept by her side, and she hated him. What had he done to merit such a sentiment as this? He hadn't been able to make money. He hadn't been able to keep honest. He hadn't been able to keep his wife. A dreadful sense of his own failure and weakness came over him as he looked at her. He had lost her as he had lost honor and innocence. It's a man's fault if he can't keep his wife. She wasn't made to be the wife of a poor clerk. Suddenly the fact of her presence there struck him. Why hadn't she left him to go to McAllister? She might have done so. No one would have blamed her for leaving a dishonored man. Why had she chosen to come to him here, when she might

have been free? Since she had not sent the letter, perhaps she had repented of it—had felt pity and sorrow for him, regret and shame for herself. No—what pity had she shown him, what tenderness since she came? She had avoided him. She loathed him, she hated him. Over and over again she must have come to him from her lover.

Closely dovetailing one onto the other, the events that connected her with McAllister followed in sequence, and he understood it all. She had cajoled him to crime, she had led him from honesty to sin; with her body she had lost his soul. What was she? A harlot. A terrible revulsion sweeping up in him at the sight of her as she lay—her sensuous loveliness—filled him with a nausea. He was an obstacle in her way, but she had not been able to quite ride over him. Something stronger than her hatred had evidently forced her to seek him here, and he would have gone with her, duped, poor and disgraced, if he had not found the letter! His limbs refused to hold him any longer. He sank down by the bed and buried his face in the coverlid. After a little while he cautiously got on his feet, but his movement penetrated Gertrude's sleep and she stirred, and now the defaulter, who would have left his country to begin a dishonorable existence with her, paused terrified lest she should awaken and claim him again. Gertrude sighed heavily, but did not open her eyes, and, fearfully looking at her as she lay there, Warrener crept stealthily out of the room.

When Gertrude awoke the next morning she remained for a little time postponing the act of getting up and linking herself to the uncongenial duties of her life. Already her brain and senses began again to sink under the heavy weight of *ennui*.

The luxuries she had grown to love and depend upon were to be hers no longer. Her house with its pretty things, her furs and her dresses, would all be sold, and with scarcely a rag to her back she would be a wanderer on the face of the earth with George. Why, indeed, had she come? For the

twentieth time she regretted it. Why hadn't she got a divorce? Then everybody would have pitied her. She didn't care what happened. She wished she were dead. She turned and saw the door was wide open into George's room. She called to him, and got no reply. Thinking that he had gone down to breakfast, she lay a little while half dozing, then got up and went languidly into his room. The hot, bright sunlight flooded it. The bed was untouched. The dress-suit case was gone. On the floor were scattered the sheets of her letter to McAllister. As George had let them fall, so they lay. On the table was an envelope addressed to her in her husband's handwriting. She tore it open. It contained three hundred dollars in bills. He had given her all he had with him and left her. Gertrude Warrener was free.

### CHAPTER XXXII.

On the day of his appointment with McAllister, Warrener lay in a state of nervous exhaustion in a New York hospital, whither an ambulance had carried him after he had been picked up insensible on the floor of the Forty-second Street station. By Monday, although still threatened with total collapse, scarcely master of his uncertain limbs and twitching features, he left the hospital in a cab for his downtown office.

He was afraid to open a paper for fear it should contain an account of himself, and he would not have been surprised if a detective had laid a hand upon him at his own threshold. There was nothing more formidable than an office boy at the door, who stared curiously at his employer's sudden and singular appearance.

The personnel was away for the most part on a two weeks' vacation, and only a couple of clerks greeted him. He asked if Mr. McAllister had been in, and, learning that he had not, he went on through at once to his own private room.

He was evidently as yet undiscov-

ered. Word was brought him that Mr. Harkweather desired to be called up on the telephone if Mr. Warrener came in town that day. Should the message be sent? No, he would go over himself to the other offices. His room, retired and familiar, gave him a fresh shock of horror as he recalled the state of mind in which he had left it. Everything was locked and in order. He did not even look at the pile of letters by his inkstand. His safe, containing the telltale papers, was grim and noncommittal. The disclosures were yet to be made; he had ceased to shrink from them. He must find McAllister. He called for a whisky and soda and drank it off. The glass was scarcely emptied when his old employer was announced, and as soon as the gentleman entered Warrener saw that he knew.

He was right. Harkweather knew, and his plans, moreover, were made, his decisions taken. He considered himself, not without reason, an unusual man, with two more unusual men back of him in the persons of Mr. McAllister and Mr. Bellamy.

For the first in his recollections on Friday afternoon, during an interview with the former, Harkweather had been carried out of himself and led to follow other lines than the dried, fossil-like codes to which he was accustomed. He had been magnetized by McAllister's intensity, and, unwilling to display a less noble attitude than these two millionaires laid down for themselves to assume, had consented to act as spokesman for the gentlemen and to carry the affair through himself. Little short of a moral and ethical thesis was in his mind, phrases of counsel and admonition were to follow after a verbal chastisement, but the chief fact was that he had come to pardon his old clerk and to offer a solution for the wretched man's future. With an agreeable sense of self-approval and contemptuous pity for the man he was to see, he entered the treasurer's office.

Warrener's appearance took him by surprise. The ghost of manhood, from whose face material elements appeared to have vanished, leaving a pallid mask

through which an eager spirit shone, raised his eyes to his employer. A tremor passed through him, shaking him like a leaf. Conventional greeting got no further than Mr. Harkweather's lips. He put his hand on Warrener's shoulder.

"Come"—he spoke not without compassion—"I'm glad to see you back here, George. We didn't know where to look for you. We supposed you to be on your vacation, but you know you left no address."

Warrener moistened his lips.

"Men who go off as I did don't leave their addresses."

"Sit down."

Harkweather himself took the revolving desk chair. He had always thought George had a good face, an honest face, and as he looked at it now those qualities did not seem to have been eradicated. It was the face of a victim, of a man possessed, and not criminal.

"This is a sad affair, George, a very terrible affair."

Warrener interrupted:

"I came back to give myself up. I had an appointment with Mr. McAllister here on Friday, but I couldn't meet it. I was in the hospital. I want to see him. Do you know where he can be found?"

Harkweather evaded, and invited again: "Warrener—sit down. Mr. Bellamy has had an automobile accident at Newport. He won't be attending to any business for a long time. His affairs are in his brother's hands, and this affair has been put entirely in mine. As I understand"—the banker's habitual calm helped him to fall into his business tone—"as I understand, you have been employing money intrusted to you by us, for your own account, with the result that our accounts with you are wiped out. To call a spade a spade, Warrener, you have appropriated other people's funds."

Warrener's voice broke in, hoarsely:

"I've stolen what you gentlemen put into N. E. W. That's how it stands. If I hadn't run away as I did, I should have used the N. E. W. funds, too."

Harkweather frowned and shook his head. He held his hand up warningly.

"The affair is quite bad enough, quite shocking enough, as it stands."

No life came into the ashen individual. The longer the other looked at him the more spectral he appeared. The nervous twitching of his muscles was painful to observe.

Warrener had got his keys out of his pocket, gone over to the safe and taken from it a pile of papers neatly docketed and filed. He laid the documents down on the table before his chief.

"This bunch is yours, Mr. Harkweather. This is Mr. McAllister's. It's all separate from the rest of my accounts."

The banker curtailed his prearranged address and came to the point of what he had to say:

"Mr. McAllister and I have agreed to stand this loss. We had unlimited confidence in you, and—it may seem a strange thing to say, but I still have faith in you. I believe you can pull out of this. At any rate, we intend to give you a chance."

But George broke violently in upon him:

"Don't say that name again! Damn him! Damn him!" He lifted his shaking hand and laughed. "His pardon? My God! He has the nerve to pardon me? He won't sue me? Mr. McAllister won't send me up to Sing Sing? But he shall, Mr. Harkweather! I wouldn't take his mercy if it were God's! I don't want anything from him but law and justice, and that's what I've come down here to get."

Mr. Harkweather had never heard from his clerk as many sentences at once before. He had never seen him so little commonplace. George Warrener had never surprised or deeply interested his distinguished employer. But this agony, this hatred, this excitement, were quite out of the ordinary. Greatly taken aback by the acting out of line of the third party in his plan, Mr. Harkweather said:

"I don't follow you, Warrener. Your attitude against McAllister is extraor-

dinary. You have robbed him, and he has eloquently pleaded for you to me."

Warrener threw back his head and laughed again.

Harkweather continued: "Perhaps you have a grudge against Mr. Bellamy, and against *me*, as well?"

Warrener interrupted: "No, sir, don't think it. My grudge is with McAllister. I just want to get this thing fixed up here between you and Mr. Bellamy and myself, and then"—his intonation was terrible—"I want to see the other man."

Mr. Harkweather watched the figure of the clerk as he passed and repassed him in his agitated walk up and down the room.

"You say, to use your words, that you want to stand by this. How do you mean?"

"I mean, let the law take its course. You will prosecute me."

Harkweather shook his head. "I appreciate your feelings; they confirm my good opinion of you. You have made a colossal error, a terrible mistake, but none of us will prosecute you. Bellamy has signed to this effect, and I have given McAllister my word. You will live this down."

Warrener stopped close to his chief's chair in his nervous walk. "I'll pay up what I can," he nodded; "you can be sure of that. I've got a lot of household things and stuff, and I've got these." He drew out of his pocket a package and threw it down on the table. It contained Gertrude's jewels. He had taken them from her bag. He said, hesitatingly:

"I bought them for Mrs. Warrener; they've got a certain value."

Harkweather looked up from the package to his clerk's face, and, determined to at least present his preconceived plan, said: "The idea is that you should go West. Of course you will have to resign your office in the N. E. W. But the company will still employ you, and out there in active business, in the oil fields, you can build up a new career."

Accumulated years of regard which Warrener had felt for his chief, by

whose greatness he had always been overwhelmed, made him now, even at this moment of his anguish, sensitive to the benevolence, unexpected and out of character with the business man. "Thank you, Mr. Harkweather, if you were the only one in it; but as it is, I can't accept anything at all."

Mr. Harkweather was discomfited. This individual who asked nothing but the penalty of his acts, who insisted on justice without mercy, was not the man he had prepared himself to meet. He set mentally to work to discover a reason for his clerk's attitude toward McAllister. He tried to reconcile it with the latter's eagerness to reinstate Warrener. He began to ask himself in what way the defrauder had been defrauded. Warrener repeated: "Where is Mr. McAllister?" And before he was answered, continued: "How did you know about this? How was it found out?"

And even as he explained the older man found himself beginning to see light.

"Why, your wife, Mrs. Warrener, came here on Friday to meet McAllister. She came, so I understood, so I supposed, in your place. You didn't, then, know this?"

But Warrener did not answer him. He drew in a short breath like a cry. He covered his trembling lips with one hand, as if to suppress what they might say. *So he owed this clemency to his wife and her lover?* How it lowered him! Lower and lower down he felt himself sink. His limbs hardly supported him as he came close to Harkweather's side; leaning on the table, he asked, between his chattering teeth: "Where is Mr. McAllister?" And Harkweather was heartily glad to be able to say:

"He sailed on Saturday for Europe."

"Did he—go alone?" Warrener was not master of the question, which was, indeed, hardly audible. For the first Harkweather met his eyes humanly, man to man.

"I don't know, Warrener, I'm sure."

Warrener lifted both his hands in the air, and cried, passionately: "Gone!"

Gone!" and then said, after a second, more composedly: "He's a bigger coward than I am a thief."

Harkweather neither admitted nor understood the temptations of the flesh. Incapable of any feeling that was not in the character of laboriously or honestly making money, there were certain sins more heinous than others to him because mysterious and regarded by his chaste temperament with a puritanical, modest shame. He was disgusted to be part of an affair which looked uglier at each glance. He tapped his eyeglasses on his fingers, his face was embarrassed and disturbed. Both were silent for some five seconds. The ice slipped down in the water pitcher with a little click, the muffled sound of the distant cable cars in the street hundreds of feet below came almost like fairy bells. Harkweather finally broke the silence with a practical suggestion:

"Wouldn't you like to have them telephone out to your house and say you are coming home?"

"I guess not, thank you."

Warrener went over to the window and stood there looking out on the roofs. Harkweather had taken the two packets of papers into his possession. "These papers are to be all destroyed. Where shall you be for the next few days?"

Warrener turned, and Harkweather saw a change had passed over his face. The passions of hate and torment had given place to a singular calm.

George said, quietly: "I'm going home to rest."

"That's right. I really think you would be better off there than anywhere."

Then the gentleman, fully aware that he was responsible for this man whom he had liberated on parole after a crime, said, practically: "That resignation to the company, George; it will be quite as well to get it off your mind."

The first indication of life appeared in Warrener's thin face. A brilliant red came to his cheeks and remained as he sat down at his desk, took pen and paper, and, looking up, asked: "Will

you please dictate this, Mr. Harkweather? I guess I'm not up to composing it."

In his stiff and rather ponderous style the banker dictated a formula for the resignation of the treasurer of the N. E. W. The other sealed and addressed the letter and sent it at once by private messenger; then he got up, shut the safe, took his hat and followed his old employer toward the elevator shaft. There Harkweather said:

"I'm going out to my place in New Jersey to-night. Let me have a line from you there. We shall want to talk things over, you know."

The tragedy seemed left behind the two men in the offices they had just quitted. The unfortunate man's eyes had assumed something like the old commonplaceness, and, although Harkweather was sorry for him, his pity could not in its essence be other than patronage, and, not caring to go into the personal morals the question involved, he said: "Get your views of the situation all in order, George, during the week, and let me hear from you," in much the same tone as he might have ordered Warrener to copy out a letter in the letter book, when he was confidential clerk in the employ of Harkweather & Fulsome.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

When Warrener and his chief parted it was close on to noon.

The day was glaringly hot, the light and blaze poured out over the city as if the sky were a caldron reversed. Heat came up from the pavement and burned his feet, but George was unconscious of the temperature except that he suffocated as if the pores of his flesh had closed; he was on fire within and without. He walked on and on, trying as it were to outwalk his misery, and to escape the reverberation in his head.

Once he found himself before a restaurant, and the cooking smells sickened him, although his hunger was growing unbearable. He went in and



tried to eat, tears ran down his cheeks and mingled with his food; he could not swallow, his throat closed upon the mouthfuls. He left the restaurant and his untasted supper to wander the streets again. He found himself at the office of the different ship companies. He read over the list of Saturday's sailings, until he came to McAllister's name. It stood alone on the register. If his wife had joined this man, it was under an assumed name, and he would never know. He had left her forever, she would go where she could and with whomever would take her.

He found himself wandering about the streets of this lower city, part of the heat-fagged, withered crowd. Dirty children got in his way. He made his passage between moving cabs and trucks, and in and out among the slow-moving traffic of the harbor streets.

He found himself at the Battery, looking out at the shipping, at incoming vessels, at the numerous ferries. The clear calls and the more distant muffled whistles came to ears which were growing dull of hearing. The fine network of masts against the sky of the late September evening, the broadening expanse of the water, as it sweeps into the greater bay, he saw through a veil.

He found himself on a bench in Battery Park late in the night. He must have slept, for he was lame and stiff when he tried to move, and sickened at the taste in his mouth, like the taste of tears. He made his way along the docks as far up as Twenty-third Street; went into the ferry house, and bought a ticket for Slocum.

"A return ticket?" the man asked. And Warrener said: "No, one way."

He was early, and stood in the rear huddled close to the rail. The heavy smell of the wharves, of stagnant water that, green and oily, washed the slime of the bulkhead, came to his nostrils, with the hot stench of the ferry itself—emanations of dirt and foul air from the horses' quarters and the human quarters. At this advanced hour—it was after eleven o'clock—there was no noise about the dock. Intermittent

whistles from the boats—lonely calls which smote the air with a melancholy, prolonged insistence—were the only voices of the night. There were not half a dozen passengers, and they had all gone to the front of the boat. Warrener was alone.

It was a clear night. As the boat slowly left her pier a half-moon cast a pale glimmer on the broken waves, but the delicate reflection was vague and confused among the countless mirrorings of the harbor lights, whose long, bright arms stretched out from the shores and struck the waters, or gleamed from the masts and bows of passing crafts.

As the ferry swung into the stream, George saw the city he had left range itself in colossal proportions along the island, a specter of magnificence, lighted from limit to limit, a splendid view in the summer night. It had been a hard mistress to the suburban clerk; he had left youth in it, vigor, manhood and honor, and they would not let him retrieve! *Could he retrieve?* Can a man buy trust once forfeited, win back his integrity? The words of a sermon of his uncle came to him. He had heard it preached when he was a boy. "And if a man die shall he live again." Uncle Sampson, in solemnly urging his flock against temptation and fall, had been undocrinal, and gave little hope of reinstatement after crime, and had closed with: "Keep innocency, my little children."

Warrener's head was bowed on his breast; he wanted to see McAllister first—what he would have done to him he did not formulate—he wanted to see him face to face; but even the intensity of that desire had passed away. He would have gone up to Sing Sing and worked out his retribution. He had an idea it would have cleansed him. *But they wouldn't let him take the penalty!* He was dishonorably discharged. He had been given his freedom by a man who would never sincerely respect him again; he had been pardoned by the man who had helped to ruin him. He was stained, degraded and disgraced. He touched the edge of the rail to his

hot palm; it felt cold and moist. After a few seconds, in which the trembling that had mastered him lately shook him like the ague, his mind began to break loose from the intense strain of the moment and go back to his commonplace past. For years he had traveled to and fro on this same ferry between his house and his business. Grand Street came to his mind, and the Sunday mornings. They had been happy and content; it was all that fate had meant them to possess. He could see his old bedroom, with the sunlight dancing on the walls; as it slipped away and faded, shone for a moment and was gone, so his peace had gone. His soul yearned to the happy port of the little Grand Street house as a derelict, poor, vagrant hulk of bad renown and dangerous fame, passes in the night some lighted harbor where in times gone by its anchor has safely been cast.

The water rose and fell around the ferryboat, and slipped curling away, in long, sinuous waves. Warrener's eyes followed them, the throb and tremor of the vessel vibrated through his nerves.

Where was Gertrude? At home? He had no home, they had none. What should they do, where should they go? They? Why, she was gone long ago; she was not in the question, he was alone to solve the future and its problems.

Where was his wife? Where was Gertie Warrener?

As he said the name to himself over and over, it became a spell, and mercifully exorcised his present from his

mind. He saw her in the simple blouse with the roses through it. The Gertrude of Grand Street, with her round, pretty figure, her little laugh, and the ways that endeared her. He did not know how much he had loved his wife. He had so little time; he worked too hard.

As he let himself see her before on the same homeward journey, on this same ferryboat over and over again, he saw her now in her picture hat and the pink dress of their honeymoon. Her light draperies floated around her. The feathers shook in her hat. She came up out of the gleaming water to him across the short deck. The hand she laid against his cheek was wet and cold.

"Gertie!" he murmured. "Gertie!" She walked away from him, slowly, slowly, dragging her ruffles across the dirty deck, out toward the end of the boat. Warrener followed her. She passed like a mist through the trellis of the iron gates; they were half open, and Warrener easily made his way through. She led him to the edge of the ferry, turned and laughed at him over her shoulder, took a step forward, and disappeared.

Whether to follow this apparition lovely and dear to him with the memories of youth; whether once at the edge, conscious of what he did, intending always so to do. Warrener decided to solve the question forever; at all events he gave a cry, held out his arms as one who would embrace a vanishing figure, and stepped off the boat into the night.

THE END.



# SOCIETY'S CHRISTMAS SACRIFICE



**I**t was a society paragon who wrote that Christmas was no longer kept by the rich, only by the poor. This is only half a truth. It is kept by the rich for the poor. Never in the history of our times was Christmas kept in so genuine a spirit as now. Never have women of high degree and men of Arabian Night wealth so bent to the lowly as they do now on the Great Birthday. It marks society's sacrifice to the Child of the manger.

This is more true of the millionaire circle than of any other. Such sacrifice of time, vitality and money is an epidemic among the upper ten thousand in every great American city.

One may not see as many Christmas trees among the homes of the elect as in olden times, but that is because these gaudy baubles have been removed to give delight to those in the tenement, the prison, the hospital. Here, in squalid surroundings, among those whom the hot iron of destiny has seared, arises the tree of tinsel and angels, of vivid crystals and scarlet paper, telling its parable of pleasure.

It is here by the grace of the purse of the millionaire society woman. It is she who stands as Santa Claus, not with reindeers, but with her own young—robust, vigorous and happy—by her side, administering to the general gladness of the moment, and being taught the blessedness of giving.

The falling off of extensive and expensive gift-giving between those equal-

ly rich and powerful is due to the magnitude of the presents from the able to the unable, from the full coffers to the widow's mite box, from those whose lives are "full of a number of things," to those whose existence is a treadmill or a trembling nightmare.

The residential section, where live the elect, is quiet and deserted on Christmas Day, because society and wealth have gone hand-in-hand, twins in benevolence, to the desolate spots to scatter luxuries on those whom life has only taught the creed of necessity.

What matter that the woman of leisure and pleasure gets one present less this year, if that gift goes to the woman of drudgery and starvation?

One well-known social leader wrote to a friend:

I will send you a little gift in a day or so; to-day I send you my love and good wishes. Frankly, I haven't had time to look after your present, but you won't mind when I tell you I wrapped up over one hundred gifts for the children in the Hospital for Incurables, bought fifty presents for the working girls in church society, and served a dinner to one hundred old women from the poorhouse at noon.

My eldest boy has taken fifty men from the Home for the Aged down on our private car to the stock farm for a whole day, with a supper to-night, and my girl has her Sunday-school class—the one in the College Settlement district—in the two touring cars for a day at our seashore cottage, and they are to have a big tree to-night. So, you see, the family is busy.

The answer to that letter shows how mutual is this spirit of making Christmas a gala day for the poor and the dejected.

I understood your lack of time. I, too, have not had a free moment [it ran]. The

Visiting Nurses gave me the names of a dozen poor families who had never known the joy of a Christmas tree; also a list of things most wanted by the inmates, young and old; things they had sighingly wished some modern Santa Claus would bring.

We got up a dozen Christmas trees—stunning ones, too—and pressed into service most of my dancing class. Twelve of the best merry-makers among the young men volunteered for the Santa Claus performance, and I need not tell you what a sight it was to see all those light-hearted young people who had never known suffering crowded together in the basement, giving up their whole evening to wrapping up packages and decorating trees.

With the connivance of the mothers, we put up a tree Christmas Eve at each house. Such a joyous time! At each place the whole neighborhood was gathered in, for there were toys and goodies galore.

I levied on every rich member of my family for shekels, and had enough left over to give one poor seamstress a sewing machine and a bedridden old violin player a phonograph.

Two little millionaire boys were persuaded by their mother to be the hosts at a tree given to fifty newsboys. The affair was held in the great stone barn on the country estate, which was decorated in a fascinating way, and the little "street sparrows" were given a whole day and night in the crisp open, with wholesome meals.

There were gifts for all, and huge woolen stockings to take home, simply bulging with all manner of dainties that spell Christmas to every boy's heart, be he the velvet-breeched lordling of a country mansion or the half-clothed youngster of a squalid alley.

It is no uncommon thing for girls in the smartest sets to decline social invitations for Christmas week, because of the hours they are using for the poor.

It is quite probable that if one rang the doorbell of twenty fashionable houses in a group on Christmas Day, he would find that the majority of the women were out in the slums, hospitals or among the poor of the church, slaving to give pleasure as they never slaved for anything else, except, possibly, their own balls or dinners.

Here and there one hears of individual cases of impulsive Christmas offerings that spring from the dictates of a

sympathetic throbbing heart. Some of them read like the romancing of a story-teller.

For instance, one well-born and wealthy woman, with the flesh pots of Egypt at the other end of her electric button, heard by accident, while doing a conventional piece of charity work, of a family in a cheap back street who were starving.

It was Christmas Eve—nearly sundown. She had just enough time before dressing for dinner to drive to this house and see if there was any truth in the report, and if so, to give orders to her footman to send food from her own larder to carry the family through for a day or two.

She found a wretched room in a dingy house facing an open block, exposed to the worst of the weather. Two small children were asleep on the floor, barely covered. The room was almost destitute of furniture. There was no fire, and only a guttered candle gave light and warmth. Sitting by the rough table, looking into the sputtering tallow, was a woman who was young by nature, old by despair and lack of the commonest comforts of life.

As she looked up to greet her visitor, she showed neither curiosity nor eagerness. She was not lovely, nor had she ever been. Hers was not the tragic type. She was plain, gaunt, exhausted. The hair was drawn roughly back from a wrinkled forehead; the eyes were gray, hopeless, weary; the mouth listless, inert, drooping.

She wearily assented to the statement that she was starving. She told in the tone of a talking machine of cheerless nights and dinnerless days, of the desertion of her husband, her lack of work, and her rebellion against applying to any institution for charity which would part her from the children.

When the blood began to touch her face, and hope came back to her eyes at the promise of food and work, the other woman asked if the children knew that the next day was Christmas.

At that point of pressure the woman—the mother—gave way to all the pathos and the passion brought back to

life by a kind touch. She told in gasping, simple sentences what faith in Santa Claus these starving children had; how, ragged and shivering, they had knelt a few moments before and told the Christ Child that they knew; for, though they hadn't always gotten bread when they asked for it, they always had gotten a toy on His birthday.

"And I wanted them to keep their faith," sobbed the mother. "I have always managed to find an old broken toy which I could buy for a penny, and put in the stocking on Christmas Eve, but this year I failed. I even searched the refuse barrels, but I am too tired and cold to search any more, and what will they say to the Christ Child tomorrow, if they find He has failed them?"

Then both women were crying. There were hurried good-bys and instructions, and in another hour that same carriage came back with footman and occupant heaped to the eyes with bundles.

The sleeping children were gently rolled like Indian papooses in blankets thick as a hand, while logs sent a leaping flame through the little stove. The two women, now "sisters under the skin" and with a common purpose, turned in to make that room the stronghold of Santa Claus.

It would be only tedious and time-taking to detail the amount of money spent by the rich and the fashionable on Christmas Day, not a penny of which goes to their families or friends.

Mostly this lavish giving is through the hands of those used to the business of charity; those who are not sporadic in their work of uplifting the lowly, but who have entered into the task through love or a desire for an occupation.

This saner method of philanthropy is protection. It prevents the duplicating of gifts; it guides the erratic—and none are more erratic than those who are overemotional about the poor—to spend their money on the deserving instead of the flagrantly undeserving.

The students of philanthropy in great cities know the malicious from the un-

fortunate, the professional from the really pathetic and shrinking ones. They deal face to face with a hundred cases of sadness a week, and their hearts have learned to be obedient to their head.

The best meaning woman who goes rampant into Christmas cheer-giving to the poor is liable to do as much harm as good.

She accuses the student of crime and charity of being a stony-hearted person; one in whom the emotions and sympathies have been deadened by constant contact with the ugly and evil side of life. So accusing, she rushes wildly and foolishly into a very maelstrom of beggars. These, gauging her truly, with her unguided sympathy backed by a full purse, levy upon her without conscience or satiety; and she learns too late, for that Christmas, at least, that she has never touched the outer edges of the circle of deserving poor.

It is as foolish to characterize as hard-hearted a worker in organized charity as it is to pronounce a doctor unsympathetic because he does not cry aloud at his patient's pain or go into a state of alarm over every vagrant ache brought to his notice. One of the reasons we trust the physician is because he does not lose his head. Familiarity with suffering every hour of his years teaches him the difference between the assumed and the real, the dangerous and the trifling.

The wise and the very wealthy, therefore, who have had experience, and want to do the most good with their gifts, consult with these practical workers in the civic field before they go ahead. They have learned the disaster of indiscriminate alms. Some have learned it in a way more calculated to produce bitterness and withdrawal than development.

One woman, for instance, was offered a great heap of second-hand clothes by a derelict of a woman, who looked as though she herself should be discarded and sold at the second-hand shop. She told the rich woman a pitiful tale. She would not listen to an offer of money, but insisted that the rich woman should

buy the clothes, which were all she had left of her dead father's shop.

Thinking the poor woman too proud to take the money without earning it, the society woman gave her a far too sufficient sum for the clothes, and then sent them to a downtown church mission.

Later the old woman sued her for having obtained the clothes from her without paying for them. She threatened to sue the superintendent of the mission for receiving stolen goods. She actually found a shyster lawyer who undertook the initial part of the case, and, though it never went into the courts, it put every one concerned to serious annoyance and waste of time.

Each of the separate garments had to be traced through the tortuous ramification of a charity mission and returned to the lawyer before he would withdraw his client's protest.

There had been no witnesses to the transaction and no receipt for the money, so the malicious beggar who had schemed the affair had it in her power to give the rich woman an exceedingly nasty quarter of an hour.

Another foolish thing the amateur does in her first year is to give gifts that are not needed and are totally unwise. The woman who sent a fur coat to a poor negro in Florida for Christmas is an admirable example.

The unwisdom didn't detract from the woman's good-heartedness, but Christmas giving and a level head and guided hand should go together, if the poor are to be really benefited.

Those who have worked in this field with great skill, who have given the vital essence of their intelligence to help the unable, feel piqued and disheartened when wealthy amateurs rush in with hands dripping with cheer, which they fling without aim on the heads of hundreds who should be in the county prison.

During the last few years the actual workers have controlled the situation, and while society appeared on the festal scene in the center of the lamplight, bubbling over with beauty and gladness, and giving of its personality and power

as well as its purse, it is usually true that the guiding arm behind it is organized charity in some form.

This may be the church, which has learned how to be the Philistine as well as the good Samaritan through costly experience; for it has seen the dying one on the other side of the road get up and walk as soon as his palm's itch for money was eased. Or it may be that the work is done through the Visiting Nurses, the College Settlement, the hospital guilds, and dozens of relief societies.

But here is the spark which ignited this story: instead of society being merely content to give as of old, and allowing the organizations to distribute their money, the fashionables want to be with the poor at the magnificent moment. To them physical suffering is a maddening thing, too great a curse for human beings, and they offer strong, young arms and eyes in a self-sacrificing fashion to the bodily disabled.

And the social strugglers dive deep, too—they who would put jewels in the mute foreheads of images of wood and brass if the inner circle, to which they covet, did it.

They blindly follow where society leads, hoping, praying that the leader will bow to them graciously in the wards of the dead and dying, where all humans are leveled at one stroke into the equal inheritors of only life and death.

They give just one more dollar than the famous giver of exclusive balls, and they hope their names will be writ large on the list next to hers.

Cut off by a freak of inheritance from the intimacy of society's chosen ones, they are in a paradise instead of a prison when they make packages for cell-dwellers, cheek by jowl with women whose visiting cards they have never seen. Such glorious contact gives them the chance to casually couple their names together in talking of Christmas Day. It allows them to speak with authority of small tricks and characteristics of the socially great, which seem to sound the depths of intimacy.

It is a great chance for the social



struggler—this Christmas gift-giving by fashionable society. In older days, the goats on the left sought to enter the pastures of the sheep on the right by the church door; but this was a flimsy, futile experiment compared with the entrance through Christmas charity.

The newer method works well in two ways, for the suffering ones are vastly benefited by it, as well as the strugglers.

Then there comes to the work another class—those whose hearts have been so nearly broken on the wheel of their own lives. These come also wearing the purple of power and carrying the scepter of command, but they touch the bruised and the bleeding as an angel might.

The sick in the hospitals get their sympathy, but the wife or mother working to keep body and soul strung on the same fragile thread, while the breadwinner is in a white cot, offers a greater appeal.

They furnish nurses or companions to be arms and feet to the temporarily disabled, and they go with advice and comfort to those whose hearts are crushed. They know by their own tragedies, hidden by velvet curtains and padded walls, that mental suffering is the torment of Tantalus; and they probe with sure touch into the wound of the hopeless, the disgraced, the dishonored, the life-weary. They know where to make money ease a heartache instead of a hunger pang. They radiate sympathy and hope to those whose lives "are dry as summer's dust," and whose souls are parched.

How often they smile, and not joyously, at the envy which their prosperity produces in the ranks of the ragged and unwashed, who do not trouble to look beneath the surface. The pride of position has taught them not to bleat out their sorrows like hungry sheep, that is all. Theirs is the tongueless, toneless misery, and they recognize its mate at a glance down where the ocean of life casts its derelicts.

Yet the poor, which we will always have with us, do not discriminate between the givers, nor analyze the emo-

tions which bring the powerful, the dominant ones to their doors on Christmas.

Sufficient unto the day is the knowledge that they do come; not with reindeer, but with automobiles, which hold more of this world's goods than a Kris Kringle sleigh. Clothed in fur and radiating joy, they are allowed into the innermost intimacy for the time being, while they renew the tissues of life, inoculate the listless with vitality, merrily swing the cradle of the young, promise victory to the defeated.

And if the poor are helped, what say you about the rich?

The pennies they give are no sacrifice, but what of the renewal of their moral fiber?

Society offers itself an eager sacrifice on the Christmas altar, and comes through the fire better and braver.

Possibly it dances none the less, and dines as well and as often, but why shouldn't it?

It would surely be a sorry world, one seriously out of joint, if all were to sigh! Youth should not be less gay in its pleasures because it was sad in another's sorrows.

Cannot one dance more blithely on Christmas night on feet that were fleet to poverty's rescue on Christmas morning?

A woman who went to five splendid dinners the week after Christmas told stories of need and despair that she had met with on Christmas that brought a tense silence among the listeners, and each one went out the next day and added his or her offering to these needs.

One story was of a fine old worker who had both legs cut off, and who refused to beg, borrow or steal. He had been a proofreader, and while his delicate, tired wife earned enough in a sweatshop to give them bread, he yearned, in a heartbreaking way that she would and could never understand, for something to read; not now and then, but for a flood of reading, because his practiced eye took so much in at a glance.

He was too brave a soul to let his wife know his one passionate wish.

She, to whom reading was toil, was striving and dying to supply oil for the bodily wheel, unmindful of the mental need.

When the story was told, here is what happened:

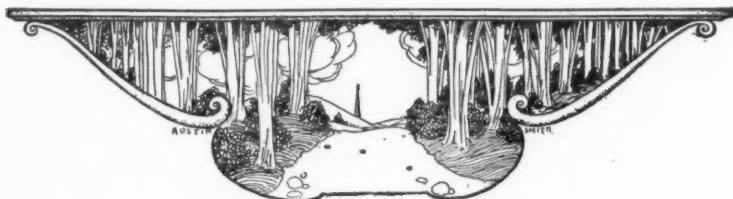
Life subscriptions to various papers and magazines, weekly and monthly, and two new books a week—all were addressed to a disabled proofreader down in an unheard of alley.

No gift-giving among equals, no Christmas trees in the drawing rooms of the mighty, can bring about such nearness to the spiritual essence of

things as this drawing near of society to the haunts of its lesser brothers.

It is not the providing for some poor body's existence that gives such a contented glow to the man or woman of luxurious life; it is being touched with the divine spark. It is a magnificent movement toward good—this of the rich and powerful toward the helpless and the defeated on the Great Birthday.

It rises above all others as the sun above his planet, and endows giver and taker with a new physical and moral lease of life.



## MONA LISA

NOT in the cloistered cell of ignorance,  
 Nor in the narrow bounds of convent-close,  
 Nor yet in prisons of austere repose  
 Didst thou learn wisdom. No pale innocence  
 Thy master was. But through the ways intense  
 Of Life and Love and Struggle, where there grows  
 The Tree of Knowledge and the too-red Rose  
 Thou lov'st too well, thou sought'st Life's recompense.

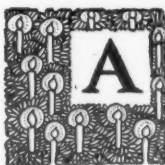
And found it, beautiful and frail and fond!  
 The knowledge that both good and evil cheat,—  
 Even as the gods know—found it everywhere,  
 Writ on the surface of the stream Despond  
 That waters all the lilies of Defeat  
 In the broad valley of the Great Despair!

REGINALD WRIGHT KAUFFMAN.

# The INTRODUCERS

BY EDITH WHARTON

## A STORY IN TWO PARTS



At nine o'clock on an August morning Mr. Frederick Tilney descended the terrace steps of Sea Lodge and strolled across the lawn to the cliffs.

The upper windows of the long white façade above the terrace were all close-shuttered, for at nine o'clock Newport still sleeps, and he who is stirring enough to venture forth at that unwonted hour may enjoy what no wealth could buy a little later—the privilege of being alone.

Though Mr. Tilney's habits of life, combined with the elegance of his appearance, declared him to be socially disposed, he was not insensible to the rarer pleasures of self-communion, and on this occasion he found peculiar gratification in the thought of having to himself the whole opulent extent of turf and flower border between Ochre Point and Bailey's Beach. The morning was brilliant, with a blue horizon line pure of fog, and such a sparkle on every leaf and grass blade, and on every restless facet of the ever-moving sea, as would have tempted a less sophisticated fancy to visions of wet bows and a leaping stern, or of woodland climbs up the course of a mountain stream.

But it was so long since Mr. Tilney had found a savor in such innocent diversions, that the unblemished fairness of the morning suggested to him only a lazy well-being associated with escape from social duties, and the chance to finish the French novel over which he had fallen asleep at three o'clock that morning.

It was odd how he was growing to

value his rare opportunities of being alone. He who in his earlier years had depended on the stimulus of companionship as the fagged diner-out depends on the fillip of his first glass of champagne, was now beginning to watch for and cherish every momentary escape from the crowd. It had grown to such a passion with him, this craving to have the world to himself, that he had overcome the habit of late rising, and learned to curtail the complications of his toilet, in order to secure a half hour of solitude before he was caught back into the whizzing social machinery.

"And talk of the solitude of the desert, it's nothing to the Newport cliffs at this hour," he mused, as he threw himself down on a shaded seat invitingly placed near the path which follows the shore. "Sometimes I feel as if the sea, and the cliffs, and the skyline out there, were all a part of the stupid show—the expensive stage setting of a rottenly cheap play—to be folded up and packed away with the rest of the rubbish when the performance is over; and it's good to come out and find it here at this hour, all by itself, and not giving a hang for the ridiculous goings-on of which it happens to be made the temporary background. Well—there's one comfort: none of the other fools really *see* it—it's here only for those who seek it out at such an hour—and as I'm the only human being who does, it's here only for me, and belongs only to me, and not to the impenetrable asses who think they own it because they've paid for it at so many thousand dollars a foot!"

And Mr. Tilney, throwing out his chest with the irrepressible pride of possessorship, cast an eye of approval

along the windings of the deserted path which skirted the lawn of Sea Lodge and lost itself in the trim shrubberies of the adjoining estate.

"Yes—it's mine—all mine—and this is the only real possession, after all! No fear of intruders at this hour—no need of warning signposts, and polite requests to keep to the path. I don't suppose anybody ever walked along this path at my hour, and I don't care who walks here for the rest of the day!" But at this point his meditations were interrupted by the sight of a white gleam through the adjacent foliage; and a moment later all his theories as to the habits of his neighbors had been rudely shattered by the appearance of a lady who, under the sheltering arch of a wide lace sunshade, was advancing indolently toward his seat.

"Why, you've got my bench!" she exclaimed, pausing before him, with merriment and indignation mingling in her eyes as sun and wind contended on the ripples behind her.

"Your bench?" echoed Tilney, rising at her approach, and dissembling his annoyance under a fair pretense of hospitality. "If ever I thought anything on earth was mine, it's this bench."

The lady, who was young, tall and critical-looking, drew her straight brows together and smilingly pondered his assertion.

"I suppose you thought that because it happens to stand in the grounds of Sea Lodge instead of Cliffwood—we haven't any benches, by the way; but my theory is a little different, as it happens. I think things belong only to the people who know how to appreciate them."

"Why, so do I—if the bench isn't mine, at least the theory is!" Tilney protested.

"Well, it's mine too, and it makes the bench mine, you see," the young lady argued with earnestness, "because hitherto I've been the only person who appreciated sitting on it at this hour."

"Ah, hitherto, perhaps—but not since I arrived here last week. I haven't missed a morning," Tilney declared.

She smiled. "That explains the mis-

understanding. I've been away for a week, and before that no one ever ever sat on my bench at this hour."

"And since then no one has ever ever sat on my bench at this hour; but, my dear Miss Grantham," Tilney gallantly concluded, "I shall be only too honored if you will make the first exception to the rule by sitting on it in my company this morning."

Miss Grantham was evidently a young lady of judicial temper, for she weighed this assertion as carefully as the other, before answering, with a slight tinge of condescension: "I don't know that you have any more right to ask me to sit on my bench, than I have to ask you to sit on yours, but for my part I am magnanimous enough to assume just for once that it's ours."

Tilney bowed his thanks and seated himself at her side. "I realize how magnanimous it is of you," he returned, "for, just as you came round the corner, I was saying to myself that this bench was really the only thing in the world I could call my own—"

"And now I've taken half of it away from you! But then," she rejoined, "you've taken the other half from me; and as I was under the same delusion as yourself, we are both in the same situation, and had better accommodate ourselves as best we can to the diminished glory of joint ownership."

"It would be ungrateful of me to reject so reasonable a proposal; but in return for my consent, would you mind telling me how you happen to attach such excessive importance to the ownership of this bench?"

"It isn't the bench alone—it's the bench and the hour. They are the only things I have to myself."

Tilney met her lovely eyes with a look of intelligence. "Ah, that's surprising—very surprising."

"Why so?" she exclaimed, a little resentfully.

"Because it's so exactly my own feeling."

Miss Grantham smiled and caressed the folds of her lace gown. "And is it so surprising that we should happen to have the same feelings?"

"Not in all respects, I trust; but I never suspected you of an inclination for solitude."

She returned his scrutiny with a glance as penetrating. "Well, you don't look like a recluse yourself; yet I think I should have guessed that you sometimes have a longing to be alone."

"A longing? Good heavens, it's a passion, it's becoming a mania!"

"Ah, how well I understand that. It's the only thing that can tear me from my bed!"

"I confess one doesn't associate you with the sunrise," he said, letting his glance rest with amusement on the intricate simplicity of her apparel.

"And you!" she smiled back at him. "If our friends were to be told that Fred Tilney and Belle Grantham were to be found sitting on the cliffs at nine o'clock in the morning, the day after the Summerton ball——"

"And that they had come there, not to meet each other, but to escape from every one else——"

"Oh, there's the point: that's what makes it interesting. If we're in the same box why shouldn't we be on the same bench?"

"It requires no argument to convince me that we should. But *are* we in the same box? You see I've just come, and when I saw you last night I supposed you were stopping with the Summertons."

She shook her head. "No, I'm next door, at Cliffwood, for the summer."

"At Cliffwood? With the Bixbys?" He glanced at the fantastic chimneys and profusely carved gables which made the neighboring villa rise from its shrubberies like a *pièce montée* from a flower-decked dish.

"Well, why not, if you're at Sea Lodge with Mr. Magraw?"

"Oh, I'm only a poor itinerant devil——"

"And what am I but a circulating beauty? Didn't you know I'd gone into the business too? I hope you won't let professional jealousy interfere with our friendship."

"I'm not sure that I can help it, if you've really gone into the business.

But when I last saw you—where was it?—oh, in Athens——"

"Things were different, were they not?" she interposed. "I was sketching and you were archæologizing—do you remember that divine day at Delphi? Not that you took much notice of me, by the way——"

"Wasn't one warned off the premises by the report that you were engaged to Lord Pytchley?"

She colored, and negligently dropped her sunshade between her eyes and his. "Well, I wasn't, you see—and my sketches were not good enough to sell. So I've taken to this kind of thing instead. But I thought you meant to stick to your digging."

He hesitated. "I was very keen about it for a time; but I had a touch of the sun out in Greece that summer; and a rich fellow picked me up on his steam yacht and carried me off to the Black Sea and then to a salmon river in Norway. I meant to go back, but I dawdled, and the first thing I knew they put another chap in my place. And now I'm Hutchins Magraw's secretary."

He sat staring absently at the distant skyline, and perceiving that he was no longer conscious of her presence she quietly shifted her sunshade and let her eyes rest for a moment on his moody profile.

"Yes—that's what I call it, too. I'm Mrs. Bixby's secretary—or Sadie's, I forget which. But how much writing do you do?"

"Well, not much. The butler attends to the invitations."

"I merely keep an eye on Sadie's spelling, and see that she doesn't sign herself 'lovingly' to young men. Mrs. Bixby has no correspondents, and the dinner invitations are engraved."

"And what are your other duties?"

"Oh, the usual things—reminding Mrs. Bixby not to speak of her husband as *Mr. Bixby*, not to send in her cards when people are at home, not to let the butler say 'fine claret' in a sticky whisper in people's ears, not to speak of town as 'the city,' and not to let Mr. Bixby tell what things cost. Mrs. Bix-

by takes the bit in her teeth at times, but Sadie is such a dear adaptable creature that, when I've broken her of trying to relieve her callers of their hats, I shall really have nothing left to do. That habit is hard to eradicate, because she is such a good girl, and it was so carefully inculcated at her finishing school."

Tilney reflected. "Magraw is a good fellow too. There's really nothing to do except to tone him down a little—as you say, one feels as if one didn't earn one's keep."

She flashed round upon him instantly. "Ah, but I didn't say that. I said the ostensible duties were easy—but how about the others?"

He looked at her a little consciously. "What do you mean by the others?"

"I don't know how far you live up to your duties, but I'm horribly conscientious about mine. And of course what we're both paid for is to be introducers," she said.

"Introducers?" He colored slightly and, flinging his arm over the back of the bench, turned to command a fuller view of her face. "Yes, that is what we're paid for, I suppose."

"And that's what I hate about it, don't you?"

"Uncommonly," he assented with emphasis.

"It isn't that the Bixbys are not nice people—they are, deep down, you know—or at least they would be, if they were leading a real life among their real friends. But the very fact that one is abetting them to lead a false life, and renounce and deny their past, and impose themselves on people who wouldn't look at them if it were not for their money, and who rather resent their intrusion as it is—well, if one oughtn't to be paid well for doing such a job as that, I don't know what it is to work for my living!"

Tilney continued to observe with appreciation the dramatic play of feature by means of which she expressed her rising disgust at her task; but when she ended he merely said in a detached tone: "It's charming, how you've preserved your illusions."

"My illusions? Why, I haven't enough left for decency!"

"Oh, yes, you have. About the Bixbys, and what they would be if one hadn't egged them on. Why not say to yourself that, if they were not vulgar at heart, they would never have let themselves be taken in by this kind of humbug?"

"Is that what you say about Mr. Magraw?"

"I've told you that Magraw is a good fellow. But when I ran across him he was simply aching to see the show, and all I've done is to get him a seat in the front row."

"Yes—but are you not expected to do something more for him?"

"Something more—in what line?"

"Well, I think the Bixbys expect me to make a match for Sadie."

"The deuce they do! Well, we'll marry her to my man."

Miss Grantham uttered a cry of dismay. "Don't suggest it even in joke! Don't you see what a catastrophe it would be?"

"Why should it be a catastrophe?"

"Don't you really see? In the first place we should both be out of a job, and in the second, I should earn the everlasting enmity of the Bixbys. What they want for Sadie is not money but position. Mrs. Bixby tells me that every day."

Tilney received this in meditative silence; then he said with a slight laugh: "Well, if position is all they want, why don't you choose *me* as your candidate?"

Miss Grantham did not echo his laugh; she simply concentrated her gaze on his with a slowly deepening interest before answering: "It's a funny idea—but I believe they might do worse."

Tilney's hilarity increased.

"At any rate," she continued, without noticing it, "there's one thing that you and no one else can do for them, and I really believe that Mrs. Bixby, in her present mood, would be capable of rewarding you with her daughter's hand."

"Good heavens! Then I should have



to take a look at Miss Bixby before doing it."

"Oh, Sadie's charming. Didn't you notice her last night at the ball? I managed to smuggle her in, though I couldn't get the others invited. What Mrs. Bixby wants," Miss Grantham earnestly continued, "what she's absolutely sickening for at this moment, is to have Sadie invited to Aline Leicester's little Louis XV. dance to-morrow night. And you are the only person in Newport who can do it. I didn't even have a chance to try—for the very day my invitation came I happened to meet Aline, and she said at once: 'Belle, I see the Bixbys in your eye; but I don't see them in my ballroom.' After that, I tried a little wire-pulling, but it simply made her more obstinate—you know her latest pose is to snub the new millionaires; and you are the only person who can persuade her to make an exception for the Bixbys. Aline's family feeling is tremendously strong, and every one knows you are her favorite cousin."

Tilney listened attentively to this plea; but when it had ended he said, with a discouraging gesture: "I was just going to try to get an invitation for Magraw!"

"Lump them together, then—it will be just as easy; and if you *should* want Mr. Bixby to do anything for you—such as putting you on to a good tip——"

"Thanks, but I've been put on to too many good tips. If it weren't for the good tips I've had, I should be living like a gentleman on my income."

"Well, you'll make Mrs. Bixby think you the most eligible young man in Newport. And if you could persuade Aline to ask Sadie to the dinner before the dance——"

"*Comme vous y allez!* What would be my return for that?"

She rose with a charming gesture. "Who knows, after all? Perhaps only the pleasure of doing me a very great favor."

"That settles it. I'll do what I can. But how about getting your costumes at such short notice?"

"Oh, we cabled out to Worth on the chance." She held out her hand for good-by. "If only there were something I could do for *you!*"

"Well, there is, as it happens," he rejoined with a smile. "If I succeed in my attempt, let Magraw dance the cotillon with you at Aline's."

She hesitated, visibly embarrassed. "I should be delighted, of course. I'm engaged already, but that's nothing. Only—I'm going to be horribly frank—the Bixbys are rather a heavy load, and I'm not sure I can carry your friend too!"

"Oh, yes, you can. That's my reason for asking you. You see, I really can't help Magraw much. It takes a woman to give a man a start. Aline will say, 'Oh, bring him, if you choose'—but when he comes she won't take any notice of him, or introduce him to any of the nice women. He was too shy to go to the Summertons' last night—he's really very shy under his loudness—so Aline's dance will be his first appearance in Newport; and if he's seen dancing the cotillon with you, at a little *sauterie* like that, with only a handful of people in the room, why, he's made, and my hard work is over for the season."

She smiled. "If you take a fancy to Sadie, perhaps it's over for life."

"And if *you*—by George! No, I don't think I want you to dance the cotillon with Magraw."

"Why not? Do you grudge me a comfortable home for my old age?"

He stood gazing at her as though for the first time his eyes took in the full measure of her grace.

"No—but I grudge *him* even a cotillon with you."

"Ah, you and I were not made to dance cotillons with one another; or do anything together, except conspire at sunrise for each other's material advancement. And that reminds me—I shan't see you again to-day, for we are going to Narragansett on Mr. Bixby's yacht, and to-night we have a dinner at home. But if you succeed with Aline, will you send me a line in the evening?"

He shook his head as they clasped hands once more. "No; but I'll tell you about it here to-morrow morning."

"Very well—I'll be punctual!" she called out to him, as she sped away through the shrubbery.

## II.

It was, in fact, Miss Grantham who was first on the scene the next morning; and so eager was she to learn the result of the mission with which she had charged her friend, that, instead of profiting by her few moments of solitude, she sat watching the path and chafing at Mr. Tilney's delay.

When he arrived, politeness restrained the question on her lips; but his first word was to assure her of his success. "You are to bring Miss Bixby to the dinner," he announced.

"Oh, thank you, thank you—you're wonderful!" she exclaimed; "and if there's anything in the world I can do——" She paused suddenly, remembering her side of the compact, and added with nobility: "If it is of any possible advantage to Mr. Magraw to make my acquaintance, I shall be very glad——"

She had already observed in Tilney a marked depression of manner, which even this handsome reaffirmation of her purpose did not dispel.

"Oh," he merely said, "I did not mean to hold you so closely to your bargain——" and with that he seated himself at her side, and lapsed into a state of dumb preoccupation.

Miss Grantham suffered this as long as it was possible for a young lady of spirit to endure; then she determined to make Mr. Tilney aware of her presence by withdrawing it.

"I am afraid," she said, rising with a smile, "that, though you welcomed me so handsomely yesterday, my being here seriously interferes with your enjoyment of the hour, and I am going to propose a compromise. Since it is agreed that we are joint proprietors of this bench, and entitled to an equal share of its advantages, and since our

sitting on it together practically negatives those advantages, I suggest that we occupy it on alternate mornings—and to show my gratitude for the favor you have done me, I will set the example by withdrawing to-day."

Tilney met her smile with a look of unrelieved melancholy. "I don't wonder," he said, "that you find solitude less oppressive than my company; but since our purpose in seeking this bench is to snatch an hour's quiet enjoyment, and since enjoyment of any sort is impossible to me to-day, it is obviously you who are entitled to remain here, and I who ought to take myself away." And he held out his hand in farewell.

Miss Grantham detained it in hers. "To have you surrender your rights because you are too miserable to enjoy them, leaves me with no heart to profit by my own; and if you wish me to remain you must stay also, and tell me what it is that troubles you."

She reseated herself as she spoke, and Tilney, with a deprecating gesture, resumed his place at her side.

"My dear Miss Grantham, the subject is too trifling to mention; I was only trying to calculate how long one could live in Venice on a hundred dollars."

"Why in Venice—and why a hundred dollars?"

"Because, when my passage is paid, it will be all the ready money I possess, and I have always heard that one could live very moderately in Venice."

Miss Grantham flushed and threw a quick glance at him. "You're not thinking of deserting?" she cried, reproachfully.

The young man returned her look. "Deserting—whom?" he inquired.

"Well, me, if you choose! You can't think the comfort it's been to me, since yesterday, to know that there were two of us. I understand now how humane it is to chain convicts together!"

Tilney considered this with a faint smile. "How long have you been at it?" he asked.

"At the Bixbys? I joined them last April in Paris."

"Ah, well—I've been six months

with Magraw. It wasn't so bad when we were yachting and knocking about the world—but since we've taken to society it has become unendurable."

"Yes. I didn't mind ordering the Bixbys' dresses as much as I mind providing opportunities for their wearing them."

"I don't so much mind trotting Magraw about—though you know it's nonsense about your having to dance with him this evening——"

"No matter about that. What *is* it that bothers you?"

"The whole preposterous situation. Magraw's the best fellow in the world—but there are moments when he takes me for the butler."

"Oh, I know," she sympathized. "Mrs. Bixby——"

"That isn't the worst, though: it's the reaction. He took me for the butler yesterday afternoon—and in the evening I found a ruby scarf pin on my dressing table."

But her sympathy was ready for any demand on it. "I know, I know——" she reiterated; and then, breaking off, she added with a mounting color: "You know I couldn't go to the dance to-night if Mrs. Bixby didn't pay for my dress."

"Oh, the cases are not the same; and it's different for a woman."

"Why are the cases not the same? And why should I not be humiliated by what humiliates you?"

He shrugged his shoulders ironically. "I'm not humiliated by anything that poor Magraw does to me; I'm humiliated by what I do to *him*!"

"What you do?"

"Yes. What right have I to behave like a gentleman, and return his scarf pins?"

"At least you do return them! And I can't return the dresses. Oh, it's detestable either way!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, especially when one succumbs to the weakness of hating *them* instead of one's self. I hate Magraw this morning," he confessed.

She rose with an impatient glance at her watch. "Dear me, I must go. I promised Sadie to see the dressmaker

at half-past nine: she's coming to alter our fancy dresses. You see I felt sure you would get Sadie's invitation. I want you to know her," she continued. "She's really a very nice girl. I should like her immensely if I didn't have to accept so many favors from her."

"Ah, you've just expressed my feeling about Magraw. I really should like your opinion of him," he added.

"Well, you shall have it—to-morrow morning."

"Here?" he rejoined with sudden interest.

"Why not? You know I mean to dance with him this evening."

The morning after the dance it was Miss Grantham's turn to arrive late at the tryst; and when she did so, it was with the air of having a duty to discharge rather than a pleasure to enjoy.

"Mr. Tilney," she said, advancing resolutely to the bench on which he sat awaiting her, "my only object in coming this morning is——"

He rose with extended hand. "To let me thank you, I hope, for the generous way in which you fulfilled your share of the compact? It was awfully good of you to be so nice to Magraw."

She colored vividly, but held his gaze. "As it happens, I *liked* Mr. Magraw. But if I had known the means you had used to obtain his invitation——"

Tilney colored in turn, but they continued to face each other boldly.

"Did Aline betray me? How like a woman!" he exclaimed.

"I can quite understand," Miss Grantham witheringly continued, "the importance you attached to having Mr. Magraw invited to your cousin's dance. *You had to make some return for the scarf pin.* But to use my name as a pretext—to tell Aline Leicester that I was trying to marry Mr. Magraw!"

"Oh, I didn't say *trying*—I said you meant to," Tilney corrected.

"As if that made it any better! To let that man think——"

"He'll never hear of it; and you don't seem to realize that it's not easy to extract an invitation from Aline."

"I don't know that it was absolutely necessary that Mr. Magraw should receive one!"

Tilney, at this, raised his head with a challenging air. "You appeared to think it absolutely necessary that Miss Bixby should."

"Well—I don't see——"

"You don't see how I got *hers*? I dare say you'll think the same method is even more objectionable when the situation is reversed——"

She stared at him with growing disapproval. "You don't mean to say that you let Aline think you wanted to marry Sadie Bixby?"

"I told you there was nothing I wouldn't stoop to. I suppose you think that horribly low."

Her stare resolved itself into a faint sound of laughter. "Good heavens, how enchanted Mrs. Bixby will be!"

"The deuce she will—but of course the joke can easily be explained."

"To whom? To Mrs. Bixby? I'm glad you think so. I should have said it would be difficult."

"Oh, Mrs. Bixby will never hear of it. I told Aline in the strictest confidence——"

"Every one at the dance was congratulating me on my conquest of Mr. Magraw. I don't see why Aline should keep one secret and not the other."

Tilney's brow darkened ominously. "Well, at any rate, I'll soon undeceive Magraw!"

"A thousand thanks. And I suppose you leave it to me to undeceive Sadie? She talked of you all the way home. Of course, you're almost the only decent man she's met."

"Ah, then the remedy is simple enough. You've only to introduce a few others."

"Yes, I've thought of that." Miss Grantham examined him with a cold smile. "But are you quite sure you want me to?"

Tilney met her question with another. "What on earth do you mean?"

"I'm not stupid in such cases, and I could see that Sadie was interested. Did you find her so perfectly impossible?"

"Impossible? I thought her very pretty."

"That's going to the other extreme—but she certainly looked her best last night. Still, before deciding, I should want you to see her by daylight—and without the paint——"

"Oh, she had on very little paint. One could see her own color through it."

"Yes—she has an unfortunate way of getting red——"

"At that age I should call it blushing."

Miss Grantham's face grew suddenly stern. "Of course," she said, "I should never forgive myself if you were only trifling with Sadie——"

Tilney paused. "But if I were in earnest——?" he suggested.

She gazed at him intently for a moment. "After all, I might be saving her from something worse!"

### III.

For two mornings after that Tilney, to his secret regret, had the bench on the cliffs to himself. On the third morning he was detained indoors somewhat later than usual on pressing business of his employer's; and when he emerged from the house he was surprised, and considerably dismayed, to find his seat tenanted by the incongruous figure of Mr. Hutchins Magraw.

Given his patron's unmatutinal habits, and rooted indifference to the beauties of nature, it was impossible to conceive what whim had drawn him to so unlikely a spot at so improbable an hour; and Tilney's first impulse was to approach the seat, and allay his curiosity by direct inquiry. Hardly, however, had he begun to advance when the flutter of a white skirt through the Cliffwood shrubberies caused him to retreat abruptly into the covert of lilac bushes edging the lawn. It was by a mere accident, of course, that an unknown female, wearing a white gown, happened to be walking along the path from that particular direction. The path was open to the public, and there

was no reason to assume any coincidence between—

Tilney drew a sharp breath. Mr. Magraw had risen and was advancing in the direction of the approaching petticoat; and as it was impossible for him to recognize its wearer from where he sat, it was obvious that he expected some one, and that the invisible female was no casual stroller drawn forth by the beauty of the morning. The next moment this conjecture was unpleasantly confirmed; for Miss Grantham emerged from the shrubbery, and placed her hand in Mr. Magraw's without perceptible surprise. He, then, had also been expected; and she had actually had the effrontery to select, as the scene of their tryst, the seat which, by every right of friendship, should have been kept sacred to her conversations with Fred Tilney!

"The idea of telling him about my bench!" Resentment of her perfidy was for the moment uppermost in Tilney's breast, or was, at any rate, the only sentiment to which he chose to give explicit expression. But other considerations surged indignantly beneath it—wonder at woman's unaccountableness, disgust at her facility, disappointment, above all, that this one little episode, saved from the wreckage of many shattered illusions, should have had so premature and unpoetic an ending.

"Magraw—if only it hadn't been Magraw!"

He had meant to turn away and reënter the house; but a feeling of mingled curiosity and wretchedness kept him rooted in his hiding place, while he followed with his eyes the broad swaggering back of Mr. Hutchins Magraw, as it attended Miss Grantham's slender silhouette across the lawn.

"I hadn't realized how disgustingly fat the man has grown. One would think a fellow with that outline would know better than to rig himself out in a check a foot square, and impale his double chin on the points of that preposterous collar! It's odd how little the most fastidious women notice such details. If they did, fewer men would

make themselves ridiculous. Why are they standing there, looking up at the house? Perhaps, after all, it *was* an accident, their meeting. No—they're making straight for the bench—by George, I believe they were looking at the house to make sure I wasn't coming! Don't be alarmed, my dear Miss Grantham, I've no desire to interfere with your amusements. I see now, though, why Magraw was in such a hurry to have me balance his bank book this morning. Just a dodge to keep me indoors, of course. It's beastly bad taste, anyhow, to make a poor devil like me go over a bank book with such an indecently big balance. That's the kind of thing that makes a man turn socialist. Why the devil should Magraw have all those millions while I—well, to be sure, poor devil, he needs them all to make up for his other deficiencies. I'd like to see how long Belle Grantham would share that bench with him if it weren't for his bank account! It must be hard work to talk to Magraw at nine o'clock in the morning. I wonder what the deuce she's saying to him?"

The two objects of Tilney's contemplation had by this time settled themselves on the seat which their observer still chose to call his own, and something in their attitudes seemed to announce that theirs was no transient alighting, but the deliberate installation which precedes an earnest talk.

"Well, she could talk to anybody, at any hour of the day or night! That's her trade, poor girl, as much as it is mine. Only I can't see why she should give Magraw *my* particular hour. Now that I've given him such a good start they've plenty of other chances of meeting. But perhaps she's afraid of competition, and wants to clinch the business by this morning interview. Poor girl! How she must hate it at heart! I'll do her the justice to say that if she had enough to keep body and soul together she'd never look at a Magraw. But if this hand-to-mouth life is hard on a man it's ten times worse for a woman—and her day is over sooner, too. Poor girl! No wonder she

shrinks at the idea of growing old in such a trade. To see people cooling off, and the newcomers crowding her out—how can I blame her for being afraid to face such a future? Why, I ought to do what I can to help her—but to help her to Magraw! Bah—there's something rotten in our social system; but it isn't her fault, and only a primitive ass of a man would be fool enough to blame her, instead of pitying her as a fellow victim."

At this point Miss Grantham started up with an apprehensive gesture with which Tilney was painfully familiar. "She's had to look at her watch to realize how time was flying! She doesn't seem to find it goes so slowly with Magraw. Perhaps my pity's wasted, after all. That's the way she always lingers on after she has said she couldn't possibly stay another minute. Poor Magraw! She's playing him for all she's worth, and I don't suppose he even knows he's on the hook. Oh, I don't blame her—not in the least!—only I think she might have chosen another place for their meetings. Hardened wretch as I am, I was beginning to have a sentiment for that bench—it would never have occurred to me to sit there with Miss Bixby, for instance. It's queer how a woman's taste deteriorates when she associates with common men—but I mean to let Miss Grantham know that, though she's welcome to Magraw, she can't have my bench into the bargain!"

By this time the couple under observation had completed their lingering adieux, the gentleman returning across the lawn to his house, while the lady retraced her way toward Cliffwood. Tilney remained in concealment while Mr. Magraw strode by within a few feet, the fatuous smile of self-complacency upon his lips; then the young man, emerging behind his patron's back, struck across the lawn and overtook Miss Grantham as she turned into the adjoining grounds.

She paused as she became aware of Tilney's approach, and cast a rapid

glance in the direction from which he had come; but he had taken care not to show himself till Magraw had vanished in the shrubberies, and he was quick to note the look of reassurance in Miss Grantham's eyes. She held out her hand, blushing slightly, but self-possessed.

"*J'ai failli attendre!*" she quoted with an indulgent smile; and the smile had well-nigh stung her companion to immediate retaliation. But he meditated a subtler revenge, and dissembling his resentment, asked innocently: "Have you been here long?"

"It has certainly seemed so," she replied in the same tone.

"Well, at any rate, my involuntary delay has enabled you to enjoy what you originally came out to seek;" and, in reply to her puzzled glance, he added pointedly: "The pleasures of solitude."

Unmoved by the thrust, she turned a smiling look on him. "But what if you have made them lose their flavor?"

"Then it was almost worth my while to have stayed away!"

She held out her hand. "The experiment was so successful that you need not try it again," she said sweetly. "But time flies, and I must hasten back into captivity."

He detained her hand to ask sentimentally: "I hope you are not losing your taste for freedom?" and she replied, as she hastened away: "Come and see—come and see to-morrow!"

He stood in the path where she had left him, and slowly drew from his pocket Mr. Magraw's latest gift—a jeweled cigarette case. He took out the cigarettes, transferred them to his pocket, and then, with a free swing of the arm, flung their receptacle into the sea.

"Do you come and see to-morrow!" he muttered, addressing himself to Miss Grantham's retreating figure; then he lit a cigarette, and walked rapidly back to Sea Lodge.

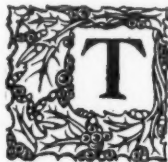
"I shouldn't have thought it of her!" he said as he entered the house.



# DRAMA *in the* DOLDRUMS



"Just Out of College" introduces some amusing types and is quite possible to laugh at occasionally, but is disappointing. "The Bad Samaritan" is already dead, and "Mary and John" is inexplicable. Alfred Sutro's play, "The Walls of Jericho," is dull until the third act. Margaret Anglin sincere and effective in "Zira." Other plays



THIS season, so far, has put me to the severest test I have ever known. It has been signally discouraging and oppressive. The theatrical offerings have been wretchedly unsatisfactory, and after sampling a half dozen of them, and finding the quality unredeemed, a dreadful gloom settled upon me, and in a sort of morbid strain I began to fancy that perhaps I was losing my sense of appreciation.

This was not a comforting thought. It was due to a sort of conscientious "germ." My colleagues also seemed to be suffering, but even the things they hailed as endurable made no appeal to me. At last, one night, in desperation, I went to see Mr. George Ade's play, "Just Out of College," at the Lyceum Theater, in the deliberate determination to like it. I promised myself that I *would* like it. I preached to myself the doctrine that every play was really good, and that if I thought otherwise, it was due to my own mental error.

Surely no critic has ever been in such a plight—or, if he has, he is less candid, and keeps the mood to himself. I prefer to exploit my own moods, which are many and variable. So behold me at the Lyceum Theater on the first night of Mr. George Ade's "Just Out of Col-

lege." I thought relentlessly of "The County Chairman" and "The College Widow," both successful productions by this same author. I dismissed from my mind the horrid fate of "The Bad Samaritan," with which, unfortunately, I shall have to deal later.

My mood was most cheery; it generally is at the theater, where I make a point of casting aside the petty cares of daily life—and usually succeed. The occasion was assuredly full of possibilities, for in the case of Mr. Ade there is always the chance of a new and a vigorous outlook. The piece began quite refreshingly. It was, according to the program: "In three acts; dealing with modern conditions. The scenes are laid in one of the larger American cities, it doesn't matter which." That was comforting.

In the first act the young college man, *Edward Worthington Swinger*, was displayed in all his youthful audacity and "freshness." He was in love with *Caroline*, the daughter of the "pickle king," but, being quite impecunious, his suit was not desirable. The "pickle king" thereupon decided to give him twenty thousand dollars and start him in life, on the condition that he held no communication with the girl until he had at least "made good." This idea, not new, was, nevertheless, amusingly put, and it served to introduce various types that augured well

for the success of the following and crucial acts. A first act, as a rule, paves the way. It is not always exciting, but it sets the ball rolling, and is not lacking in importance.

After the first act of "Just Out of College" I beamed. I felt radiant. I liked it. I went out into the lobby and heaved sighs of relief. My morbid streak was, after all, justifiable. My power of appreciation remained undimmed. Oh, it was all most gratifying! The horrid ideas that had oppressed Mr. Robert Elsmere, that most conscientious of persons and parsons, and that had apparently claimed me, vanished. The first act was most pleasing, and I hailed it. I heard comments on all sides. Nobody appeared to think that it was quite up to the George Ade mark, and I was sorry for these people.

I went back to the theater for some more, unsheathing a number of enthusiastic adjectives for use later on. People imagine that it is pleasant to write in a scathing strain. It may be amusing to read what are popularly called "roasts," but it is rather saddening to write them, as a steady thing. Alas! In the succeeding episodes of Mr. Ade's play, behold a time-worn figure of most conventional farce, clamoring for admission. Enter *Aunt Julia*! This lady, who had money, was credited by young *Swinger* with having died and left him the twenty thousand dollars that he had received from the "pickle king." Thereupon ensued a series of "complications," made up of stage lies, stage tricks and the cut-and-dried methods of ancient farce, that sent me shivering back into my shell.

*Aunt Julia* was dead! They hung up *Aunt Julia*'s picture, festooned in black, in the Pure Food Exposition, where young *Swinger* was trying to "make good." All his friends came out and condoled with him on the demise of *Aunt Julia*. Poor *Aunt Julia*! And then, of course, the old lady cropped up, and there were misunderstandings and explanations and quibblings and nibblings and wriggings, and lo! "Just Out of College" sank into the pit of easy, ordinary farce.

Even then I wouldn't quite give in, and I haven't yet quite given in. I am bound to admit that "Just Out of College" is weak George Ade, that it possesses few of the qualities that made this humorist famous, but I maintain that it introduces us to some extremely amusing types, and that it is quite possible to laugh at it occasionally. It is the best I can say. That it was a disappointing play is a certain fact; that it gave me at least one act during the progress of which I was able to prove to myself successfully that I was healthy, all right and mentally sound, is a grateful circumstance. I am deeply grateful to that circumstance.

Mr. Ade seems to have written much of this play with scissors. Jokes that he had apparently clipped from his notebook were introduced irrelevantly. Actors and actresses who had nothing to do but utter a facetious line or two abounded. A woman came into the railway station and said: "I'm going to Duluth," and the ticker seller retorted: "You ought to be ashamed of yourself." Flip oddments like that were rung in. Every time Mr. Ade thought he had a joke, Mr. Frohman engaged an actor to utter it. Some of the quips were scarcely worth this expense.

Yet there was one character, that of the feminine stenographer, that was genuinely well done, and it made us all laugh. This was a real skit on the typist, the imperious, majestic, silk-clad siren, who consents to click a few keys for her daily clothes, and who is regarded with awe by her employer and his myrmidons. This was good and artistic. The type was woven into the story, and did not occur irrelevantly, like some of the other characters. In fact, the only impression that will remain with those who saw "Just Out of College" is that recorded on their mental tablets by *Bernice McCormick*, stenographer.

In this piece young Mr. Joseph Wheelock was "presented" as a "star," and nothing could have been more ludicrous. This young actor, who has played many juvenile rôles very well

indeed, and who is popular for that reason, was horribly freighted by the knowledge that he was supposed to be "it." It was a funny occasion. If Mr. Ade turned his attention to parodying the ridiculous modern convention that makes of each inadequate actor and actress a "star," he would find a splendid field for overwhelming burlesque. Little Mr. Wheelock is nice, young, enthusiastic and trained, but he is not a "star," nor would it seem likely that of such a personality one could ever materialize a luminous body. As *Edward Worthington Swinger*, he was self-conscious, and never seemed able to "get off" the stage without that ominous wait for recognition so general nowadays. What the actors know as a "scene call"—for the uninitiated, I will explain that it is an interruption of hand-clapping elicited by some fetching exit—is the curse of the American player. The struggle to obtain this leads to all sorts of crimes against art and good taste.

Eugene Jepson was the best actor in "Just Out of College," and Miss Blanche Stoddard, who played the typewriter girl, did so most creditably. Katharine Gilman, Mabel Amber, George H. Trader and Georgie Mendum had conspicuous parts in the cast. "Just Out of College" will not add feathers to Mr. Ade's cap. His sparkle seems to have gone; the fizz has departed.

"The Bad Samaritan," a George Ade play that occurred earlier, is already dead. I fancy that the *de mortuis nil nisi bonum* legend is scarcely applicable to plays. Yet it does seem ghoulish to take up a deceased farce and expatiate upon it. Historians, however, are bound to weave their little chronicles even around such subjects as Nero and Caligula. History is one of those hateful things that we make every day, without being able to help ourselves, and the stage works hard at the loom.

Mr. Ade's "Bad Samaritan" was so contemptible that it hurt not only Mr. Ade, but the dramatic season. It plunged the Garden Theater into darkness, and it made clay of a marble

promise. Of the qualities that threatened to enshrine the humorist in the affections of the playgoing public there was hardly a trace. The piece seemed to have been "to order"—the result of a cool request to rush on before the success of "The College Widow" and "The County Chairman" had been forgotten. A more cold-blooded effort to make a play on the strength of a reputation I never remember having witnessed.

There were types even in this—dull, dreary and pointless. They ambled on and they ambled off, uttering cheap witticisms on any subject that happened to occur to the playwright. There was no effort at concentration or at dramatic consistency. The idea of the thing was that a dismal old bore called *Uncle Ike Gridley* transferred all his property to his nephew, in order to take a rest, and then, seeing that his relatives were getting the better of him, and that his nobility was unrewarded, recalled the transfer.

"The Bad Samaritan" suggested the late Charles Hoyt, but it was lacking in Mr. Hoyt's gay exuberance and in a good many of the little touches that gave the Hoytian farces their value. Had it been the work of an outsider, it would scarcely have played a second night. Richard Golden, who was the "star"—and Mr. Ade is surely unfortunate when it comes to stars—was hard and stagey and conventional. He never made the right sort of appeal to the audience. One had no sympathy with this sort of Samaritan, and it was very difficult to imagine what it was all about, or whether it were designed to be humorous, pathetic or tragic.

Another sad event—still in the doldrums—was the production, at the Manhattan Theater, of a comedy in three acts, by Edith Ellis Baker, called "Mary and John." They changed the title later to "Mary versus John"; they changed it when it was about time to change the play, for the presentation of which there was no conjecturable excuse. *Mary* and *John* were married, and exceedingly fond of each other, but Mary hated to ask her husband for

money, and went back to her studio life in order to earn it for herself. There she was speedily disenchanted, and ready to resume relations with her *John*, who had our hearty sympathy.

This flimsy thing was eked out drearily. The playwright—if I may so call her—had no humor, no powers of observation, no ability to write amusing dialogue, no ideas on the subject of character. You saw *Mary* and *John* at breakfast; you heard *Mary* sing "Violets" in a voice that would have nipped any flower, fragrant or otherwise, in the bud; you beheld *Mary* borrowing money from the cook, though she hated to ask her husband for it; you heard *John* beseeching the domestic not to let *Mary* climb the stepladder; you noticed that *Mary* hoped that *John* would not take cold—and the orchestra always played "Violets."

To add to the ludicrous incongruity of these proceedings, the rôles of these two precious idiots were played by Miss Sadie Martinot and Mr. John Mason, both of whom appear to have passed the turtle-dove stage. To watch a couple of thoroughly well-matured people endeavoring to portray a young married couple gave one's sense of humor the shock that it needed, and from which it never recovered.

In fact, "Mary and John" was one of those inexplicable happenings that almost defy analysis. One wonders why such a piece was rehearsed, and one yearns for the names of those who, at rehearsal, could possibly have thought that it would "go." For a play like this does not need the professional critic or the first-night audience. The scenshifter, the theatrical scrub-woman, and the satellites that hang around most theaters, would all have known that "Mary and John" was doomed. One can scarcely deplore the failure of such plays. Such failure is inevitable. There are many productions the fate of which must be problematic, and as to the "box-office" success, even the habitual critic may have doubts. But there could have been no such doubt in the mind of anybody who saw "Mary and John" at its rehearsals.

Of "The Walls of Jericho," which I saw in London, I told you fully in an article written from the English metropolis. And now it has crossed the Atlantic, and been "presented"—oh, the "presents" that we get—at the Savoy Theater, with James K. Hackett and Miss Mary Mannering in the rôles "created" on the other side by Arthur Bouchier and Miss Violet Vanbrugh. The piece, you will remember, is a sort of tirade against that vulgarly boomed quantity known as the "smart set"—a delectable phrase that has passed into the jargon of the day.

Half a dozen extremely foolish but not typical people with titles loll around drawing rooms, and talk in the strain that the plebeian playwright imagines plausible. It is the way they should talk if the playwright had the management of their tongues. Jericho is, of course, London. The mania for the game of cards known as "bridge" is Mr. Alfred Sutro's great point. They all play in the afternoons, and Mr. Sutro is careful to show you that duchesses and "ladies" indulge, and among them the heroine, who has the *Family Herald* name of *Lady Alethea*. Her husband, the sickeningly virtuous hero, does not play bridge. He works in the "cast end."

Exactly why half a dozen harmless ladies shouldn't amuse themselves in their own homes, with their own money, instead of making nuisances of themselves by rubbering among the slums, and nosing around in the insolent manner that idle women sometimes affect in the name of charity, but really because they have nothing better to do, is not explained. However, we could have forgiven Mr. Sutro for his idea, if it had been entertainingly worked out. Any idea goes, and any point of view is interesting, if it be enliveningly set forth.

But "The Walls of Jericho" is dull and verbose, and nothing in the slightest degree dramatic occurs until the third act is reached, and the "hero" turns on his wife and arraigns "sexless" women, society butterflies, ladies who neglect their children, and, infer-

entially, race suicide. This is the one speech for which the play was apparently written. I should prefer it uttered as a "turn" at Proctor's or Keith's, rather than as a reason for sitting through a dismal evening of eventless chatter.

The play was exceedingly successful in London, where the population, in a sort of sycophantic attitude, is addicted to everything that treats, or is supposed to treat, of high "society." People who read with undiluted glee that the Duchess of So-and-So wore a white lace dress at her garden party, and was seen *frou-frou*-ing among the shrubs, just as though she were an ordinary person, love that sort of play. It is not conceivable why any people here should appreciate it. Society in this country has been much more effectively staged by Mr. Clyde Fitch, who, at any rate, has a saving sense of humor, and none of the horrors of a "mission." I thought the types, or alleged types, in "The Walls of Jericho" almost grew-some. The piece reminds me of one that Mrs. Langtry once produced here, called "The Degenerates." It was no whit more dramatic.

In London, however, "The Walls of Jericho" was infinitely better acted than it was here. As a rule, the contrary condition holds good, and a play is more artistically acted on this side. But who could seriously contemplate Miss Mary Mannering as *Lady Althea*? This actress is pretty and appealing, but her method is horrible. She was loud and commonplace, and wanting in subtlety and in the swift appeal of the well-keyed gentlewoman. Compared with Miss Violet Vanburgh, she was impossible. The English actress has mannerisms and affectations galore, but she is an artist, and that indescribable refinement which should certainly be necessary—as a tradition, at any rate—in a society play, gives her sterling value.

There were no illusions with Miss Mannering. I have seen amateurs do better work, and it made me ponder rather pessimistically on the lack of training among "stars" to-day. Mr.

Hackett himself, this time without a sword and the accouterments of high-falutin' romance, was also wanting in that elusive kid glove something that always tells. He was awkward and oppressed, apparently realizing that he had nothing to do until the "speech" in the third act was reached. Of the others, it is not necessary to say much.

They were a much worse advertisement for English society than was Mr. Sutro's diatribe against bridge. Such a duchess as that played by Miss Blanche Ellice made one long for the cultured lady who dispenses sausages at a delicatessen store, while the "lady" impersonated by Mrs. Harriet Otis Dellenbaugh was equally preposterous. W. J. Ferguson, a good character actor, overplayed his characters to such an extent that you fancied he would burst into a topical song, and you hoped so, for even a topical song would have been a relief.

Miss Margaret Anglin, who disappeared from our sorrowing midst some time ago, crept into the new season by means of a rehash of the old Wilkie Collins story, "The New Magdalen," entitled for this occasion only "Zira." Nothing but an overweening belief in her own power could possibly have induced Miss Anglin to trot forth again the tradition-swept romance that ran through the dramatic careers of Clara Morris and Ada Cavendish. The modern actress has no fears. Miss Anglin appeared in "Zira" as imperturbably as she did in "Camille," and, fortunately, with less artistically calamitous results.

"Zira" is, of course, built up—or dragged up—for the sake of one scene, the dramatic conflict between *Mercy Merrick* and *Grace Roseberry*, when the former is confronted by the latter, in whose "dead men's shoes" she has elected to parade. For this we waited; for this Miss Anglin waited; for this the action of the play waited. We sat there bravely resolved to endure anything for the sake of the tidbit that, like epicures, we were offered. This in spite of the fact that "Zira" was announced, none too candidly, as a drama in four acts, by J. Hartley Manners and

Henry Miller, "founded upon the same story as Wilkie Collins' 'The New Magdalen.'"

Miss Anglin's opportunity occurred in due course. It happened after a tedious evening of placid endurance. The actress naturally rose to the occasion. It was the least she could do. After so much preliminary, if she had failed to rise to the occasion, it is quite possible that, in utter desperation, the occasion would have risen to her. For a few moments she was quite electric and dramatic. Her scene with *Ruth Willing*—the rechristened *Grace Roseberry*—made a strong impression upon the audience. The nervous force displayed by Miss Anglin was quite sincere and effective. It gripped the people, and made its sensation.

Then came the anti-climax, in which *Zira* confesses her story to *Lady Clavering*. In this Miss Anglin fell quite pitifully. She was lachrymose, maudlin and monotonous. It needed real genius to carry this scene after the electric outburst, and Miss Anglin was wanting. When the curtain fell, her admirers maintained that she had justified all expectations, but the judicious grieved. It was a "freak" performance.

Oddly enough, the other woman in the case, Miss Beverly Sitgreaves, scored quite as heavily as did the "star," and I am inclined to think that Miss Sitgreaves is more of an artist. She never fails, although, not being beautiful, she rarely has any very vital chance. But Miss Sitgreaves is earnest, and the fact that she is artistic is recognized intuitively. There is no doubt at all about it. In the scene with Miss Anglin, she was grim, incisive and quite remarkable. One thing was extraordinary—it may be ungallant to mention it, but I shall do so, nevertheless—it is quite unusual to see a strong dramatic scene played by two women both as physically unbeautiful as Miss Anglin and Miss Sitgreaves. In fact, I can recall no other such experience. For once, "beauty lines" seemed to count for nothing at all.

Frank Worthing played a dreary old

clergyman in a dreary old way; Jameson Lee Finney's performance was more artistic, and there were George S. Titheradge, Fred Thorne and Mrs. Whiffen to eke out the bill. "*Zira*" was acclaimed as the first "sensation" of the season, but I'm sorry that I can't indorse this view. I found in the piece gloom unredeemed, save for the short scene to which I have alluded. I do not care for three-minute plays. I like the butter spread evenly over the bread, and am not fond of nibbling at dry corners in order to get to the lump in the middle of the slice.

Miss Maxine Elliott, with Clyde Fitch's play "*Her Great Match*," is one of the few nondisappointing events of the youthful-decrepit season. If "*Her Great Match*" be not quite equal to "*Her Own Way*" of last season, it is at least an amusing and an enjoyable comedy. The grace and charm of Maxine Elliott are irresistibly displayed, and in various little odds and ends of what, I presume, we may call "Fitchery," the actress held her own, in a delicate, drawing-room manner.

The main idea of the piece, the sacrifice of his royal future, for the sake of love, by *Crown Prince Adolph of Eastphalia*, did not appear to be unduly exaggerated. An unusually beautiful woman may surely be credited with inspiring an unusually romantic sacrifice, and the Eastphalian throne in "*Her Great Match*" could not have been as desirable as "*Jo*" *Sheldon*. At least, this crown prince was no fool, and that is something. He must have had the sympathy of the masculine audience, in any case, even if the feminine members thereof sniffed a bit contemptuously.

That "*Her Great Match*" is a greater match than it is a play is certain. Sticklers for technique and other charming qualities—which they always think that they want, until the qualities are before them, when they discover that they could have done nicely without them—will talk gravely against it. Its defects are obvious. In the case of Miss Elliott, however, a great play is unnecessary. In a great play she would probably fail. You want to see her in



a pretty love story, in which she can be light, graceful, bewitching, witty and womanly. That is quite enough. In "Her Great Match" one episode at least taxed the actress severely. In an emotional passage of the third act her limitations were too clearly defined, and you could see that she was manifestly overweighted.

Put me down as among the subscribers to Maxine Elliott's delightful method, and its refinement, its warm, well-bred undercurrent, its human appeal and its insistent witchery. Miss Elliott is not a great actress, she may never be one, but she sounds a note that has always been potent, and her sway is a sure one. She has evolved wonderfully. She is not a mere "beauty actress." Those who have followed her, as I have, may see for themselves the result of what must have been earnest work. "Her Great Match" is, at any rate, no illustration of the title of this article. There is not a doldrum in its vicinity.

And still the poor dramatist rushes to book covers! He cannot leave meek little, innocuous volumes in their harmless circulating libraries. This time it is "The Man on the Box," a novel by Mr. Harold MacGrath, that has been pounced upon for the footlights. I never read it, for life is real, life is earnest, and all that sort of thing, don't you know. It was enough for me to see it in stage dress at the Madison Square Theater, thither propelled by Mrs. Grace Livingston Furniss.

It seemed to deal with the story of an impossible young man who, disguised as a coachman, entered the service of the lovely girl of his choice, and there remained until his identity became known. Possibly this scheme worked better in cloth than it did in footlights. The production, however, was interesting by reason of the fact that it gave us some exceedingly fine acting on the part of Mr. Henry E. Dixey and Miss Carlotta Nillson. It was such acting as every lover of the stage must rejoice to see. The play was admirably cast

throughout, and what it lacked in dramatic consistency was atoned for in dramatic interpretation. Let us take what we can get, and be thankful for it.

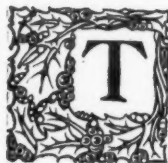
It will not be necessary to dwell upon "Happyland," at the Lyric Theater, if we can only dwell *in* it! We must endeavor to do so, for the sake of the good old comic-opera days that it recalls—bygone moments of our laughing ladhood. Frederic Ranken and Reginald de Koven were responsible for it, and De Wolf Hopper, unchanged, was the nominal "star." The noble and self-sacrificing Mr. Hopper, however, was comparatively snuffed out by a hard-working, cute little snuffer of a tiny lady called Marguerite Clark, who had nearly everything to say, nearly everything to sing, nearly everything to dance, nearly everything to wear, and nearly everything to look. If she should fail to succeed, it will not be because she had no chance. No other woman in the cast had the ghost of a show, which was a pity, for Miss Ada Deaves, Miss Bertha Shalek and Miss Estelle Wentworth all looked as though a little bit of "fat" would have done them good. Real success, however, for the actor and for the actress, is rarely the result of a production that shuts off all competition. The fight for success—that myth!—must be made bravely in the open. Candid comparison must be chronicled, and the candidate must shine amid satisfactory surroundings. I do not say that little Miss Marguerite Clark would not have distinguished herself in the midst of all sorts of clever people doing all sorts of clever things, but in "Happyland" the opportunity to judge her by this test was wanting, and I thought this a pity. Really, a solitary "turn" on the vaudeville stage would be the happiest medium for all those who want a whole drama or comic opera to themselves. To be sure, there are often monkeys, lions, dogs, birds and bears to contend with, but dumb animals have no axes to grind, and they are not dangerous to reputations.

# FOR BOOK LOVERS



# Archibald Lowery Sessions

"Commercialism" in literature again. It is an old story and raises the question whether the methods of authors and publishers have ever been those of pure idealism. "The Gambler" by Katherine C. Thurston, "A Servant of the Public" by Anthony Hope, "My Friend the Chauffeur" by C. N. and A. M. Williamson. The twenty-five best selling books



HE autumn crop of fiction has, as usual, begun to show results in the way of stimulating the reflections of the comparatively few philosophic minds that

still survive the pervasive tumult of the strenuous life. There is a wider variety of opinion provoked by the flood of new novels, and that it is more than ordinarily so is perhaps not to be wondered at if one stops to consider the mass to be digested and the rather superficial methods employed in the operation.

One view of the matter is interesting because it offers an opportunity to make comparisons. The stricture that is oftenest applied to current American and English fiction is that it is becoming "commercialized," and the phrase has got to be so common in the mouths of not only critics, but of a considerable portion of the reading public, that it is in danger of reaching the stage of mere conventionality; so that, like other conventionalities, it must, if accepted at all, be accepted with substantial reservations.

It is obviously intended as a rebuke to the sordid aims of contemporary authors, and implies an abandonment of the ideals which have hitherto prevailed. But a little reflection will demonstrate

that such a view involves an almost culpable lack of the power of just discrimination, for the offense, if it is an offense, is not peculiar to novelists of the present day. Will any one of the faultfinders undertake to say that the average contemporary novelist is under the spell of "commercialism" to any greater extent than those of the last three generations? Can it be said of any one of the latter, from Walter Scott to George Eliot, that he or she never considered the question of "royalties"? What was the main purpose of the American visits of Thackeray and Dickens? Their own letters give indications not altogether flattering to their American readers.

Pure idealism had little to do with the publication of their books; and doubtless they were written to be published. And to say this is not to discredit them, but merely to recognize the fact that they were human beings bent upon earning a living.

It is not necessary to claim for contemporary authors the genius of Dickens or Hawthorne to free them from the taint of "commercialism." Considering the purely material advantages offered to the profession of letters in these days, it is a little difficult to understand how it can be infected with the "get-rich-quick" craze. As a matter of fact, there is a vast amount of extremely creditable fiction produced every year.

indicating an attempt, at least, to maintain artistic ideals.

The sentence of condemnation is premature. Burke warned Parliament of the danger of attempting to draw an indictment against a whole people, and it seems only reasonable to demand that the indictment against current fiction should at least be delayed until the proper perspective is adjusted.

The literature of a period is one of the outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual condition, and contemporary fiction is a symptom of a general level of culture far higher than has been attained at any other period of the world's history. All the cynicism of the super-refined will not obliterate that momentous fact; momentous because it is prophetic. What it foretells, who shall say?



Octave Thanet has made her first attempt at novel writing with "The Man of the Hour," published by the Bobbs-Merrill Company. The book shows the effects of the apprenticeship served by the author in her short story work.

It is a novel with a purpose, manifestly, though she has had the good taste and artistic sense to allow the moral to work itself out in its own way, without complicating matters by a too obvious injection of her personal opinions and prejudices.

The hero is the son of an American captain of industry and a Russian countess. The latter has been, to all intents and purposes, forced to leave her own country because of her revolutionary tendencies and associations, and circumstances have practically forced her into a marriage with the hard-headed, matter-of-fact business man. With such an inheritance, Johnny-Ivan grows up, his childhood and early manhood being a confusion of conflicting purposes. It was impossible that it should be otherwise, for, between the hard realism of his father and the emotional idealism of his mother, there could be nothing in common. This conflict is what gives the book its organic unity.

The purpose of the story is to be found in its *dénouement*, and the fact that the outcome is what it is is the only evidence vouchsafed to us that the author is an uncompromising opponent of the aims and methods of the socialistic propaganda.



Although Mr. and Mrs. Williamson have not displayed a great deal of ingenuity in the selection of new plots for their stories, it is easy enough to understand the extraordinary success which their books have attained. For their tales are told with a sprightliness, wit, human understanding, cheerfulness and ease of style that make them irresistibly attractive. One can enjoy almost endless iteration of the same thing if it is always bright and good-natured. Except to the sour and cynical—and such people find *ennui* in everything—cheerfulness never bores.

Readers of "The Lightning Conductor" and "The Princess Passes" will find few novelties in "My Friend the Chauffeur," just published by McClure, Phillips & Co., but they will get a vast amount of entertainment out of the account of the adventures of Terence Barrymore and Sir Ralph Moray in their extraordinary tour with Mrs. Kidder, Miss Destrey and Beechy. The latter is unquestionably the star of the plot. Whether she is to be regarded as merely a typical *enfant terrible*, or as the provokingly fascinating young woman that Sir Ralph found her to be, each reader must determine for himself.

As every pedestrian knows, automobiles have some vicious habits, and they seem to "shine by the side of every path we tread," but "he that runs may read," and if he reads "My Friend the Chauffeur," he may find that the motor car that causes his vexation may also help to relieve his gloom.



A new story by Katherine Cecil Thurston is certain, after the success of "The Masquerader," to rouse and concentrate almost universal interest. Therefore it is not strange that "The

Gambler," published by Harper & Brothers, became, by virtue of advance orders, a "best selling" book even before the day of publication.

In some ways "The Gambler" is much more remarkable than "The Masquerader," and we are inclined to say that it is much superior to the latter in point of literary conception and execution. For, conceding all that may justly be claimed for "The Masquerader," for the qualities that made it popular, it nevertheless remains true that the situations created out of the extraordinary likeness of Loder to Chilcot were more or less strained and artificial, and that they gave an impression in consequence of something like literary juggling.

"The Gambler," on the other hand, is a thoroughly serious piece of work. It is an extraordinary picture of Irish character, drawn with an understanding and sympathetic hand, and colored under the influence of a genuine artistic perception. It might be called a character study, but that would not tell the whole story. The development in Clodagh Asslin of the passion for gambling, which she inherited from her attractive, good-for-nothing father, is the story of the girl's character. But the complications that grew out of it, the manner in which others became involved in it, furnish also the material for a strongly dramatic plot which Mrs. Thurston has, in a masterly manner, worked out to its inevitable conclusion. In this book her work not only shows no evidence of deterioration, but, on the contrary, is a proof of healthy growth.



Anne Warner's versatility has been demonstrated once more in "The Rejuvenation of Aunt Mary," just published by Little, Brown & Co. It is not often that one author is capable of creating three such characters as Von Ibn, Susan Clegg and Aunt Mary, each with a personality pronounced and distinct. It is one of the commonest things in the world to encounter the same people with new names in different stories by the same author, but originality in charac-

terization is a gift that is comparatively rare.

Aunt Mary is anything but a conventional character. In spite of her age, and even in spite of her wealth, she is still young in spirit, vigorous in action and capable of enjoying almost any situation that presents itself. So the opportunities offered her by her young nephew and his college friends are not slighted. Their progress through the book is made with the accompaniment of brass bands and red fire, and Aunt Mary lives up to her aphorism that "havin' a good time ain't a matter o' age. It's a matter o' bein' willin' to have a good time." She gives a new meaning to

Grow old along with me,  
The best is yet to be,

probably one that Browning did not contemplate.

Mrs. Rosscott, though a widow, wastes no time in useless mourning. Her sympathy with Aunt Mary is not entirely due to the fact that she is in love with the latter's nephew, for, though her youth imposes upon her a stricter compliance with conventionalities, she does not disguise her enjoyment of the accounts of the old lady's adventures.



Anthony Hope's new book, "A Servant of the Public," Frederick A. Stokes Company, is announced as the story of an actress, but in no sense an account of theatrical life. A reading of the book confirms this statement by the publishers.

There are very few details given of stage matters, but Ora Pinsent is unquestionably and fundamentally an actress, before, as well as behind, the footlights. Some cynics may say that this is a distinction that she shares with the rest of her sex, but even if it were true, the qualification must be made that in her case the study of effects off the stage is less subtly veiled than in the art displayed by many of her non-professional sisters.

Perhaps it is this lack of artistic sense—for that is what it really is—that

forces upon one the impression that Mr. Hope Hawkins has somehow failed to realize fully his conception of her character. Obviously, she was meant to be a woman of extraordinary charm; she ought to have produced the impression she did upon Ashley Mead, to say nothing of the somewhat phlegmatic Lord Bowdon, but as one's acquaintance with her grows, he finds himself rather helplessly wondering at the infatuation of the two men.

Mead is a good fellow—too good to be used to make a foolish spectacle of himself. He will have the sympathy and support of all right-thinking readers, who will be apt to breathe a sigh of relief when they reach the climax of the tale. It is the logical though unexpected outcome of a difficult situation.

David Graham Phillips has, perhaps more than any other contemporary novelist, become identified with one field of fiction. In "The Golden Fleece," "The Cost" and "The Plum Tree" he has treated the theme of commerce in a broad sense, and has only incidentally touched upon matters pertaining to society. Therefore, his variation in "The Social Secretary," Bobbs-Merrill Company, is of some interest apart from any consideration of the book itself.

Not that the story he tells of Washington's social peculiarities is uninteresting. On the contrary, it makes an extremely readable book, and the account he gives of Augusta Talltower's adventures in trying to make a living for herself, as the secretary of one of the Western new rich women, is an absorbing one. Her employers, the Burkes, are a very good sort, in spite of their crudities, and Miss Talltower is able conscientiously to further their social ambitions through the influence and position which she still retains, in spite of recent adversities.

It is an extremely good story, but it is undeniable that its chief merit lies in the fact that it is a thoroughly and realistically convincing mirror of Washington life. Anyone who has the curiosity to become familiar with that life

on its purely social side would much better read "The Social Secretary" than any essay or special article on the subject.

"Knock at a Venture" is a volume of short stories by Eden Phillpotts, published by the Macmillan Company. They deal, for the most part, with scenes which, on the whole, have seemed to be Mr. Phillpotts' favorites in his excursions into fiction, and are therefore thoroughly typical of his best work.

It will most likely be admitted that one must have a special taste for the homely aspects of life to enjoy completely these tales of Devon farming folk and the workings of their primitive passions amid the crudities of their social conditions. Anyone who finds interest in reading of the complications and customs of peasant life will welcome these stories, for they are written by one who imparts to his readers his own sympathy with what he pictures, as well as by a master of the art of storytelling. They are strong, dramatic, vivid, and, even if a little grim at times, are filled with a human pathos that never fails to strike a responsive note. Opinions will doubtless differ as to the merits of the respective stories, but the one which stands out most conspicuously is "A Pickax and a Spade, a Spade."

One of the best sea tales that have come to notice recently is L. Frank Tooker's "Under Rocking Skies," Century Company. It is good not only because it is interesting, but also because it makes the reader share with the author his love for the sea, an attraction magnified, perhaps, by the invitation which it seems constantly to hold out and as constantly to withdraw, to penetrate its mysteries and subdue its caprices.

It is a simple story, simply and directly told; indeed, its unpretentiousness rather misleads one at the outset into a feeling of disappointment at the

apparent lack of action. But the style is such as to give each sentence a cumulative effect which gradually produces an impression, as a well-told story should, and before the reader realizes it the narrative is moving along at a good pace. Perhaps this sensation of acceleration is due, partly, at least, to the author's development of the character of Captain March, who, by the way, recalls Conrad's captain in "Typhoon," though the former is something more than a mere sailor. If there is any hero of Mr. Tooker's story, it is Captain March. His personality is the dominating one throughout; in it the author has successfully effected the rare combination of the man of action and the man of reflection; "the man who does things"—to use a cant expression very popular nowadays—and the man who thinks. The other characters and the love story serve only to emphasize Captain March.

Did Mr. Tooker mean it when he spoke of the "fetlock shrouds" on page 264?



Harry Leon Wilson's new book, "The Boss of Little Arcady," Lothrop Publishing Company, is as different as possible from "The Spenders" and "The Seeker," which were, if we are not mistaken, among the popular books of their time. This last one is by no means the least of the three—at any rate, so far as the quality of charm is concerned.

The story is told by Major Calvin Blake, a veteran of the Civil War and a prosperous lawyer of the little Western city in which the scene is laid, and that he is a young man, or at least one who has not reached middle age, is sufficiently proved by the fact that the love story of the book is his own love story. His experience of the world has, however, been wide enough and varied enough to give a certain wise cheerfulness to his views of things, and his rather philosophic temperament, tending a little to laziness, has been counter-balanced by his military and legal training. Seen through his eyes, the

environment of Little Arcady and its people is very attractive; without his point of view, it is doubtful if it would be.

This statement must be qualified so far as Miss Caroline and her daughter, "Little Miss," are concerned, for even without the major's enthusiasm for them, these two Southern women could not fail to make an impression as two exceedingly charming women.



### The Twenty-five Best Selling Books of the Month.

- "The Man of the Hour," Octave Thanet, Bobbs-Merrill Co.
- "The Social Secretary," David Graham Phillips, Bobbs-Merrill Co.
- "The Gambler," Katherine C. Thurston, Harper & Bros.
- "Nedra," George Barr McCutcheon, Dodd Mead & Co.
- "My Friend the Chauffeur," C. N. and A. M. Williamson, McClure, Phillips & Co.
- "Rose o' the River," Kate Douglas Wiggin, Houghton, Mifflin & Co.
- "Ayesha," H. Rider Haggard, Doubleday, Page & Co.
- "A Servant of the Public," Anthony Hope, F. A. Stokes & Co.
- "The Missourian," Eugene P. Lyle, Doubleday, Page & Co.
- "Sandy," Alice Hegan Rice, Century Co.
- "Sabina," Helen R. Martin, Century Co.
- "The Reckoning," Robert W. Chambers, D. Appleton & Co.
- "Pole Baker," Will N. Harben, Harper & Bros.
- "The Speculations of John Steele," Amelia E. Barr, F. A. Stokes & Co.
- "The Flight of Georgiana," Robert N. Stephens, L. C. Page & Co.
- "The Rejuvenation of Aunt Mary," Anne Warner, Little, Brown & Co.
- "The Household of Peter," Rosa Nouchette Carey, Lippincott Co.
- "He and Hecuba," Bettina von Hutten, D. Appleton & Co.
- "The Clansman," Thomas Dixon, Doubleday, Page & Co.
- "Pam," Bettina von Hutten, Dodd, Mead & Co.
- "The Garden of Allah," Robert Hichens, F. A. Stokes & Co.
- "The Masquerader," Katherine C. Thurston, Harper & Bros.
- "The Princess Passes," C. N. and A. M. Williamson, Henry Holt & Co.
- "Constance Trescott," S. Weir Mitchell, Century Co.
- "Terence O'Rourke," Louis J. Vance, A. Wessels Co.





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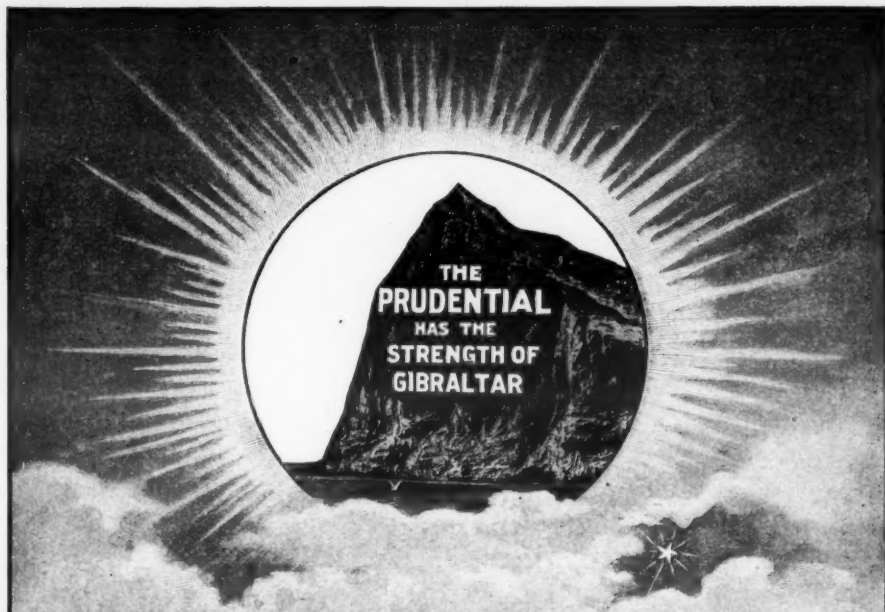
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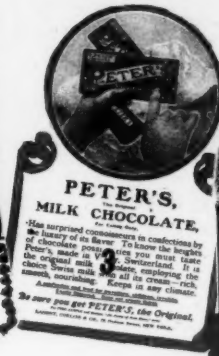
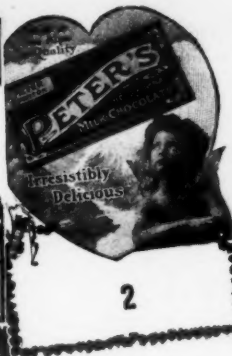
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9143 Courtship of Barney and Eileen—  
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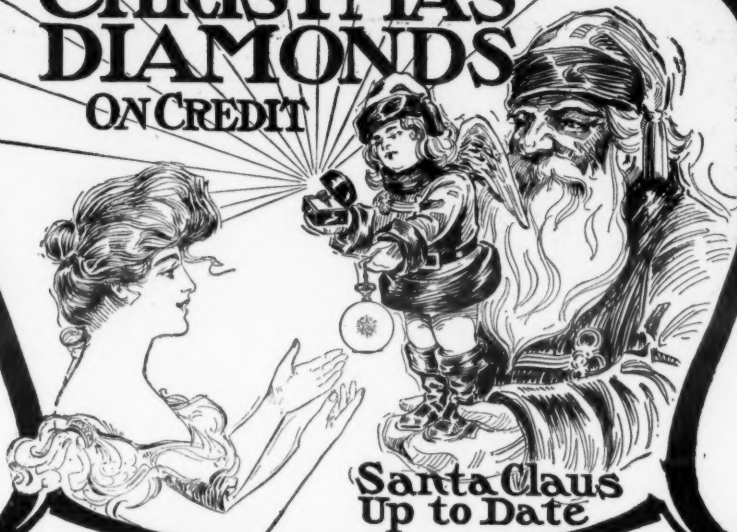
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**Our Handsome Christmas Catalogue** is resplendent with thousands of beautiful Jewelry suggestions for Xmas Gifts. Diamond Rings, Pins, Brooches and Earrings, Chatelaine Watches, Silverware, etc., for Wife, Sweetheart, Sister or Mother. Sparkling Diamond Studs, Scarf Pins and Cuff Buttons, Watches, Match Safes, Fobs, etc., for Husband, Father or Brother. With its aid you can select, in the privacy of your own home, suitable Gifts for all, both old and young. May we not have the pleasure of sending you a copy?

In competition with the entire world (both the United States and foreign countries) at the St. Louis World's Fair, our Goods, Prices, Methods and Terms won the Gold Medal, the highest award. No stronger endorsement of THE LOFTIS SYSTEM could be given.

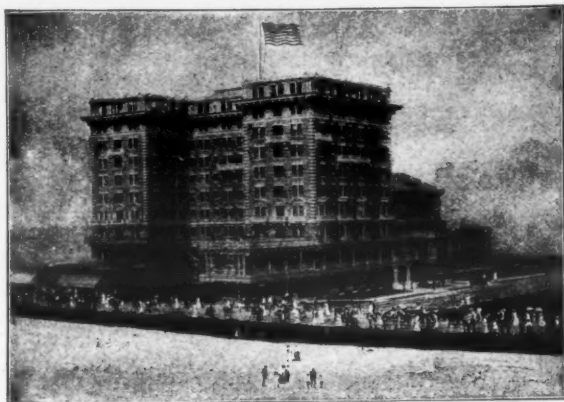
This, together with the fact that we are the largest and oldest established Jewelry House in the United States, and that we refer you to any bank anywhere or any commercial agency as to our reliability and standing should interest you in our liberal offer to send you our Handsome Christmas Catalogue and to extend to you our most liberal terms as an aid to you in making Christmas a truly Happy season. Write today for Catalogue.

**Do Your Christmas Shopping Now.** Let us suggest that you do your Christmas Shopping now, conveniently and leisurely in the privacy of your own home. Select from our Handsome Catalogue the articles you desire and we will send them to you for examination and approval. If satisfactory retain them, paying one-fifth the cost and the balance in eight equal monthly payments; if not, return to us. We take all risks and pay all express charges. Now is the time to secure the choice selections and have ample time to inspect the goods. All orders filled promptly. Write Today for Our Christmas Catalogue.

There is no better investment than a Diamond. They have increased in value more than twenty per cent during the past twelve months and Diamond experts predict an even greater increase during the coming year. Write today for Our Christmas Catalogue.

**LOFTIS**  
BROS & CO. 1853

**DIAMOND CUTTERS**  
Watchmakers, Jewelers  
Dept. P 29 92 State Street  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, U. S. A.



# Chalfonte

is a new Fireproof building of the best  
type, located

**ON THE BOARDWALK  
ATLANTIC CITY, N. J.**

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**BETWEEN THE PIERS**

**THE LEEDS COMPANY**

Solicits your patronage and invites you to  
write for Illustrated Folder and Rates.

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**CHALFONTE IS ALWAYS OPEN**

**A Handful of Handy,  
Handsome,  
Christmas Gifts.**

## **Waterman's Ideal Fountain Pen**

is the universally  
acceptable  
present.



## **Waterman's Ideal**

is an ever ready writing instrument with no disappointments. The Christmas assortment of gift pens is richer and more complete than ever. The genuine IDEAL has the word "IDEAL" stamped in a Globe on the holder of the pen. Be sure your Christmas Gift is genuine.

*For sale  
by dealers everywhere.*

Our pens with No. 4 size or larger gold pens—price, in rubber holders, \$4.00, or with gold mountings, \$5.00 and up—are generally considered the most popular, and are made with a greater variety of points and nibs than is possible to make in the smaller sizes.

*"Pens bought of any dealer may be exchanged at any of our offices."*

**L. E. Waterman Co., 173 Broadway, New York.**

138 Montgomery Street, San Francisco; 8 School Street, Boston; 160 State Street, Chicago;  
136 St. James Street, Montreal; 12 Golden Lane, London; 6 Rue de Hanovre, Paris.



No article of furniture lends itself more readily to environments reflecting refined taste than the Globe-Wernicke "Elastic" Bookcase.

Therefore, it naturally appeals to those who exercise careful judgment in the selection of holiday gifts.

Our new catalogue is replete with helpful suggestions on attractive arrangements for home libraries.

It also describes some new units which we have recently added to our line, including desk, cupboard, music, drawer, magazine and table sections, and clearly defines certain mechanical features of construction and finish that influence careful buyers to purchase Globe-Wernicke Cases—the only kind equipped with non-binding door equalizers.

Bookcase units furnished with leaded or plain glass doors, and in whole or three-quarter length sections. Finished in antique, weathered and golden oak, imitation and real mahogany.

Name of our authorized agent in your city mailed on request for catalogue. Where not represented, we ship on approval, freight paid. Uniform prices everywhere. Write for catalogue 105-J

### **The Globe-Wernicke Co. Cincinnati.**

BRANCH STORES:  
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AGENCIES  
In about one thousand cities.



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## RIFLES FOR ALL KINDS OF HUNTING.

Winchester Repeating Rifles shoot as accurately and work as surely in the arctic and tropical regions as they do in the temperate zone. The severest climatic conditions do not impair their reliability. For this reason, well-posted sportsmen, when leaving the beaten trails in search of rare game, always carry a Winchester in preference to any other rifle. Winchester Rifles and Winchester Cartridges are made one for the other.

FREE: Send name and address on a postal card for our large illustrated catalogue.

WINCHESTER REPEATING ARMS CO., - - - NEW HAVEN, CONN.

## GOLF PLAYING CARDS

are now the choice in club and society circles. Best ever sold for anything like the price. Made of selected stock with high finish—handsome—stylish—with unusually good dealing qualities. Last longer and look better than most higher-priced cards.

### FREE BOOK

Valuable and interesting 32-page Book of Card Rules—Whist, Euchre, Poker, Pinochle, Bezique, Sixty-Six, Skat, etc.—free for your dealer's name and 25 cents for a sample pack of GOLF Cards.

AMERICAN PLAYING  
CARD COMPANY  
305 Taylor Street  
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## DUPONT BRUSHES

### FOR CHRISTMAS

A good Hair Brush makes a useful and inexpensive Present. The way to make sure you are giving a good Brush is to make sure the name DUPONT and our trademark are on it—your guarantee of quality, wear, cleanliness and absolute satisfaction. The product of the largest

factory in the world. Hundreds of styles and sizes—in all woods, REAL BBOY, bone, pearl, ivory—for hair, teeth, face, hands, clothes, etc. Sold by Dry Goods, Department, Drug and Jewelry Stores. If not at your dealer's, write us for name of nearest dealer.



NAME  
DUPONT  
ON EVERY BRUSH

### FREE BOOKLET

about Brushes and Bristles, how to select and take care of Brushes, etc., sent on request.

E. DUPONT & CO.  
PARIS, BEAUVAIS, LONDON  
New York Office, 20-22 Washington Place



**Pabst  
American Indian  
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size  
7x36  
inches,

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colors  
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to any  
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**Pabst  
American Indian  
Calendar for 1906**

A beautiful, decorative art panel, of historic value as illustrating Indian character and Indian art, suitable for the living room, den or library. The photographic reduction here shown conveys but a faint idea of its color and beauty. Send for it, enclosing 10 cents in stamps or coin.

**Pabst Extract**

is pure malt—the most healthful of foods. Its benefits are two-fold—it quiets the nerves and aids digestion. It invigorates, it builds, it keeps you in condition, physically and mentally. That is why it is the "Best Tonic."

Pabst Extract is sold at all druggists for 25c.  
Avoid imitations. Insist upon the original.

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*Shawknit*  
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For  
28 Years  
Stamped  
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**AN IDEAL GIFT  
FOR THE MAN  
AT CHRISTMAS  
TIME**  
And for all Times.

Six Pairs of Socks in a -  
"RICH HOLIDAY BOX"

**\$1.50**

Delivery charges  
paid in U. S.  
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of price.



**ASSORTED  
FAST-COLORED  
COTTONS,**  
will outwear any Socks  
made.

We offer this **ATTRACTIVE HOLIDAY PACKAGE** trusting that it will appeal to our old friends, and also to those who are unacquainted with the **UNUSUAL MERITS OF OUR FAMOUS PRODUCTS**, we feeling that if you will avail yourself of this generous offer, you will ever afterwards be a permanent customer.

**Style 1959** Black (Our Famous Snowblack)  
" **195W** Black with Natural Cream-Colored Egyptian Soles  
" **5P14** Cardinal and Navy Blue Mixture.

**Style 5P1** Oxford Mixture Outside, Pure White Inside.  
" **3S5D** Rich Navy Blue.  
" **D13** Rich Tan Ground, with White Hair-line Stripes.

These goods are made in sizes 9 to 11½ and are retailed regularly at 25 cents per pair. To those desiring six pairs (\$1.50), we will furnish free a beautiful Christmas box.  
**WHEN ORDERING, PLEASE DO NOT FAIL TO STATE SIZE OR SIZES DESIRED.**

**Reliable dealers everywhere sell Shawknit Socks**

If you have any trouble in procuring them, send your order direct to us.

Our beautiful, illustrated catalogue showing many styles and realistic colors will be mailed to you free upon request.

**SHAW STOCKING COMPANY,**

**30 Shaw Street, Lowell, Mass.**



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for the  
20<sup>th</sup> Century Limited"**

NEW YORK  
CENTRAL  
LINES

America's premier train is the "20th Century Limited;" the train that, in practically a single night, traverses the one thousand miles of distance between Chicago and New York, leaving after the business day is done and arriving *before* the business day begins.

Even the boy in the picture has caught the spirit which the splendid service of the **Lake Shore-New York Central**

route arouses among its patrons and which the "20th Century Limited" so truly exemplifies.

The Lake Shore is the most comfortable fast service route in America, and the "20th Century Limited" is the foremost example of American passenger train service.

**Chicago-New York—18 Hours.**

For copy of "Book of Trains" and information about your travel matters, address undersigned.

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Passenger Traffic Manager, Chicago, Ill.

A. J. SMITH,  
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## WINTER COMFORTS

based on

# VASELINE

The three specialties illustrated below will be found particularly beneficial to every cold weather ailment. If kept on hand during the winter months a serious illness may be forestalled by their immediate application.



### VASELINE COLD CREAM

Keeps the skin in a soft and healthy condition and preserves the complexion.



### CAPSICUM VASELINE

A wonderful counter irritant that will not blister the most delicate skin.

A great improvement on the mustard plaster and invaluable for children.



### VASELINE CAMPHOR ICE

Superior to anything in use for chapped hands and lips and to allay all irritation of the skin.

# VASELINE

has a wider range of curative and healing qualities than any other known remedy.

Unlike the various imitations and "substitutes" it is absolutely **pure**, and can be distinguished by its clear brilliant color and its lack of taste and odor.

Don't buy an adulterated medicine.

Avoid all risk of substitution by noting carefully on bottle, box or tube, the name

# VASELINE

**CHESEBROUGH MFG. CO., NEW YORK**

# "GUNN" SECTIONAL BOOK CASES

*Improved System*

**GIVE A GUNN FOR A GIFT** and every

day in the year your *Christmas Gift* will be used and appreciated.

A small library today may be a large one tomorrow.

The Gunn Sectional System will take ample care of every need—one section is enough to start. The most satisfactory, durable and ornamental bookcase manufactured.

The only sectional bookcase that has the handsome appearance of a solid piece of furniture—all sectional ear-marks eliminated.

The roller-bearing, anti-friction doors easily removed to clean or replace broken glass by simply unhooking. The door can be easily removed from the bottom section without tearing down the upper sections. (See illustration) "The Gunn Way"—"The Old Way."

Gunn Sectional Bookcases are sold through leading furniture dealers everywhere or shipped direct from our factory.



**You really should get our Booklet**

It tells all about Gunn Sectional Bookcases; their very low price and many suggestions for furnishing the home and library. **Mailed free.** Write for it. Our reference—*The User*—The man with a Gunn.

**GUNN FURNITURE COMPANY**

**Grand Rapids, Mich.**

*Mfgs. of Gunn Desks and Filing Cabinets*

**YOU DON'T GET DONE  
IF YOU BUY A GUNN.**

*The Old Way.*



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MANUFACTURERS OF

**"The Chicago"**

**TYPEWRITERS**

151-153 WABASH AVENUE  
CHICAGO, U.S.A.

June 29, 1905.

Ainslie's Magazine,

633 Marquette Bldg.,

Chicago, Ill.

Gentlemen:—

Replying to your inquiry as to why you have not received copy for your August number, the reason is that we have accomplished our purpose several months sooner than we expected.

If we were placing any more financial advertising, Ainslie's Magazine would be entitled to a place among the first three publications at the head of our list based on quantity of inquiries it has brought us and the amount of sales. The quality of the inquiries is unusually high.

It is a noteworthy fact that a large percentage of those who have just invested in our Company are users of "The Chicago" typewriter, whose attention was first called to our machine through the same medium that brought our investment offer to their notice.

Yours very truly

CHICAGO WRITING MACHINE COMPANY

*Robt. Edill*  
Gen'l. Mgr.

When writing to advertisers, please mention Ainslie's



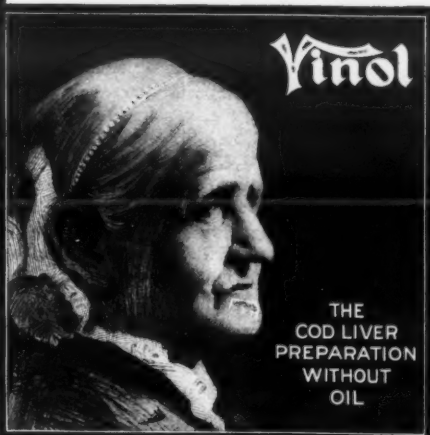
## How Modern Methods Have Improved a Standard Remedy

No one will dispute the curative value of cod liver oil. For centuries it has been recognized as the grandest of all body-building agents for wasted human vitality.

Yet a great deal of the good that should have been derived from its use has been prevented by the fact that many patients who were weakened by disease could not digest the heavy oil, either in its raw form or in an emulsion, and others would not take it on account of its disagreeable odor and taste.

Now modern science has proved that the oil or greasy part has no value whatever either as a medicine or food, and really does harm by clogging up the system.

It appears that the medicinal elements, of which there are about fifty different kinds found in the cod's liver, represent **all** the tonic, body-building and curative powers of this famous old remedy.



After twenty years' study two eminent French chemists, Mourgues and Gautier by name, discovered a way to separate these medicinal elements from the oil, and gave to modern medicine all the valuable part of cod liver oil, unencumbered by the useless, oily, greasy part.

A preparation containing all these medicinal elements, but entirely free from oil or grease, therefore **must** be the best tonic reconstructor possible. **Such is Vinol.**

In no way does Vinol resemble cod liver oil. It does not look, nor smell, nor taste like cod liver oil.

**Yet Vinol is guaranteed to contain in a highly concentrated form all the medicinal elements actually taken from fresh cods' livers, with organic iron and other body-building ingredients, in a deliciously palatable and easily digested form.**

In every case where old-fashioned cod liver oil or emulsions would do good, Vinol will do more good, for it is immediately assimilated and is acceptable to the weakest stomach; for this reason it is fast superseding old-fashioned cod liver oil and emulsions.

The elaborate process employed to separate the medicinal, curative elements from the cods' livers, omitting the oil entirely, is the only secret about Vinol. Its simplicity is its grandest feature, being absolutely free from drugs and injurious ingredients. **It is not a patent medicine, as everything in it is named on the label.**

Vinol for the last seven years has been sold by the leading druggists in all the principal cities of the country, and in most of these stores its sales have equalled, or more, the **combined** sales of all other cod liver oil preparations, which goes to prove its superiority. As a body-builder and strength creator for old people, weak women, puny children, and after sickness, and for all pulmonary diseases, it is guaranteed by over two thousand of the leading druggists of the country to be the best they ever sold.

**For sale at the leading drug store in every town and city in the country. Sent, express paid, on receipt of \$1.00 by any Vinol agent, or by**

**CHESTER KENT & CO., Chemists, BOSTON, MASS.**

Exclusive agencies for Vinol given to one druggist in a place. Look for Vinol agency where you live—if there is none, write us

# WONDERFUL

## Edison OFFER

If you love music and entertainment, if you want to cheer your home, be sure to read every word of this great offer.



### Mr. Edison Says:

*"I want to see a phonograph in every American home."*

Here is your opportunity—while this offer lasts—every thoroughly reliable, responsible person in the U. S. can get on

**FREE a Genuine Edison TRIAL** phonograph direct from us to your home without any money in advance or deposit.

No guarantee from third parties, no formality of any kind.

*Try it in your home, play the beautiful Edison records, and if then you don't care to keep the instrument, send it back at our expense. That's all.*

BUT MR. EDISON KNOWS you will be glad to keep the outfit, as RESPONSIBLE PARTIES can pay cash after trial or may now obtain it on the easy payment plan:

**\$2.00 A MONTH**  
for five months  
now pays for a genuine Edison.

(Larger installments according to size and price of outfit.)

A nickel to a dime saved a day pays for a genuine Edison—AND AT LOWEST SPOT CASH PRICE.

**DON'T DELAY.** If you want this great Edison offer, write at once for free illustrated catalog of Edison Gem, Edison Standard, Edison Home and Edison Triumph phonographs, also free catalog of Edison gold moulded records. Address

**GUSTAVUS BABSON, Mgr.**  
149 Michigan Ave., Dept. 137C, Chicago.

**FREE** Your address on a postal will bring you each month **FREE** supplement of latest Edison gold moulded records.

We accept old machine in exchange for new phonograph.

## A FREE BOOK OF BUSINESS SYSTEMS

We have a book that tells of 47 simple, economical time and labor-saving methods of handling detail. Systems for every department of your business—advertising, selling, credits,—and factory work, and if you do not find in these 47 systems one that meets your own needs exactly, we get up a special one for you.

But first let us send you this book describing our complete line of "grow-as-you-grow" Multi-Cabinet Business Systems.

**THE SHAW-WALKER CO., 151-153 WABASH AVE., CHICAGO**  
Factories: Muskegon, Mich.

## WHY THE LIGHT TENSION ON

# THE FOX TOUCH TYPEWRITER SAVES WEAR

Every time you press a key and print a letter on a typewriter, you use from 2 to 8 ounces of force.

Every time you return the carriage to begin a new line, you use from 1 pound to 4 pounds of force.

40 letters a day averaging 26 lines, 50 characters to a line means from 7540 lbs., to 30160 lbs. of force expended.

No wonder Typewriters wear out and operators get tired.

The lowest figures above represent the Fox Typewriter, the others, practically every other Typewriter than the Fox.

The heavy tension of these other Typewriters is necessary in order to operate the machine.

THAT'S WHY Fox Typewriters outlast all others.

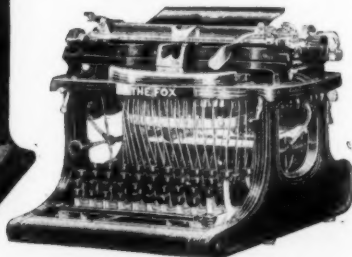
THAT'S WHY Fox operators do more work.

Let us send you one at our expense so you can prove these statements.

At least send for our catalogue.

## Fox Typewriter Co.

130 North Front Street,  
Grand Rapids, Mich.



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International Correspondence Schools,  
Box 1199, SCRANTON, PA.

Please explain, without further obligation on my part how I can qualify for a larger salary in the position before which I have marked X

Bookkeeper  
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Electrician  
Elec. Engineer  
Foreman Plumber

Mechan. Draftsman  
Telephone Engineer  
Elec. Lighting Supt.  
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Building Contractor  
Architect  
Architect Draftsman  
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# Secure Your Future

To earn more money—to secure your future—to succeed in life—cut out, fill in and mail to the International Correspondence Schools the above coupon. They will show you how you can fit yourself easily and quickly in your spare time to get more money in your present position, or change to a more congenial and better paying occupation.

Mind, the sending of this coupon does not obligate you to pay one cent. It simply gives the I. C. S. the opportunity of proving *how easy it is for you* to improve your condition right at home without neglecting your present work.  
**No risk to run. No books to buy.**

The I. C. S. is an institution with an invested capital of over \$5,000,000, and a reputation of 14 years' successful work. It has taken a day laborer and qualified him as an electrician with a salary of \$3000 a year. It has taken a bricklayer and qualified him to become a building contractor with a business of his own of \$200,000 annually. It has taken a sailor and qualified him to establish of his own a yearly business of \$200,000. It has taken tens of thousands of men and women of every age and in every walk of life and in a few months qualified them to double, triple, quadruple their salary. To learn who they are; how it was done; how you can do the same, fill in the coupon and mail it to-day.

# Succeed In Life



# WABASH SYSTEM

Is the GREAT INTERMEDIATE ROUTE between  
**THE EAST AND WEST**

Through Car Service is Operated Between  
**New York, Boston and Chicago and St. Louis**

And with but one change to

**Kansas City and Omaha**



All trains are served by Dining Cars, on which service  
is first class in every particular.

**C. S. CRANE, Gen'l Pass. and Ticket Agent, ST. LOUIS, MO.**



## ***THE BEST GIFT***

### **A Theatre in Your Home**

where the whole world of entertainment appears

Famous Bands and Orchestras play for you. Great Vaudeville Stars sing for you, sing as in real life. Close your eyes and the illusion is complete. So pure the tone, so great the volume. The Columbia Graphophone is the only perfect talking machine on the market to-day.

#### **The whole show for the whole family**

Santa Claus offers you the \$30.00 models. Send us the coupon below filled out and you get our special Christmas offer free by return mail. Sold on easy payments if desired. Buy now to avoid disappointment, and pay at your convenience after the Holidays.

#### **Columbia Phonograph Company**

Only makers in the world of BOTH Disc and Cylinder machines and Records. Creators of the Talking Machine industry. Owners of the fundamental patents. Largest Talking Machine manufacturers in the world. The only company which gives a written guarantee with its machines.

GRAND PRIZE PARIS, 1900

STORES IN ALL PRINCIPAL CITIES

DOUBLE GRAND PRIZE ST. LOUIS, 1904

DEALERS EVERYWHERE

**COLUMBIA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY, 90-92 West Broadway, New York**

Please send me your SPECIAL CHRISTMAS OFFER, with literature.

Name.....

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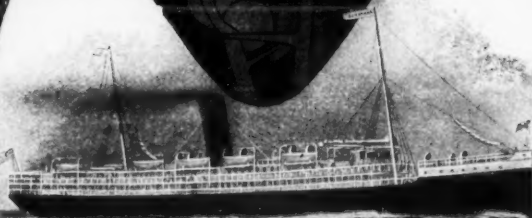
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ROUTE BETWEEN**

**NEW YORK,  
BOSTON and CHARLESTON, S. C.  
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**ST. JOHNS RIVER SERVICE BETWEEN JACKSONVILLE, PALATKA,  
DE LAND, SANFORD, ENTERPRISE, FLA., and INTERMEDIATE LANDINGS**

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**FAST MODERN STEAMSHIPS AND SUPERIOR SERVICE**

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# Plush Pillow —Top Free—

Send us your name at once, with 25c. to pay cost of shipping, etc., and we will send you this beautiful, genuine **Plush Pillow Top**, printed with artist's sketch of Julia Marlowe, Maxine Elliot or Joseph Jefferson, ready for burning. Choice of old gold, tan or light green plush. Size, 17x17 inches. Same burned, **\$1.50**. Only one free Top to one address.

**PYROGRAPHY HEADS—**  
The newest idea in Pillow Art.



**Special Offer** Our \$2.50 Outfit No. 97 **\$1.65**

For Burning on plush, wood, leather, etc. Includes fine Platinum Point, Cork Handle, Rubber Tubing, Double-action Bulb, Metal Union Cork, Bottle, Alcohol Lamp, Two pieces Stamped Practice Wood and full directions, all in neat leatherette box. Ask your dealer—or we will send it C. O. D. If you like it when you get it, then pay our special price. When cash accompanies order we include, free, our 84-page Pelican Instruction Handbook (price 25c.), the most complete pyrography handbook published.

Write today for 72-page catalogue, No. A55, in colors, and 24-page supplement No. A56, FREE. Illustrates 1500 Gibson and other designs stamped on articles of plush, wood and leather; also contains full line of Pyrography outfits and supplies, at lowest prices.



**THAYER & CHANDLER**

160-164 W. Jackson Boulevard, Chicago  
"Largest Makers of Pyrography Goods in the World."

1/2 CARAT QUALITY A-1  
\$9028 \$14. DOWN  
\$2 PER MONTH

OTHER QUALITIES  
OF SAME SIZE  
AS LOW AS \$60.

## DIAMONDS ON CREDIT

We want to do business with those who naturally shrink from dealing with an ordinary installment house.

Our plan will appeal to that better class of people who are thrifty and honest—but yet unwilling to put a large sum into a diamond in one payment. We find it is possible to profitably sell diamonds on credit at practically cash prices—and we do it. That's the secret of our success.

Upon request we will send, subject to examination, express prepaid, a 1/2 carat diamond set in mounting like cut or in any standard 14-kt. solid gold mounting. If ring proves to be in every way satisfactory, pay express agent \$14. If you prefer that goods be sent by registered mail or at first writing desire to show that you mean business, send \$14 with order. Balance may be paid monthly or weekly.

Catalog No. 346 shows a wealth of diamonds from \$6.50 to \$1,347, also watches and a general line of jewelry. It's free.

**Herbert L. Joseph & Co.**

High-Class  
Jewelry  
Credit House

213 (346) State Street, CHICAGO

Established 1882

Responsibility, \$250,000.00

A New  
and  
Wonderful  
Musical  
Instrument



**\$100.00  
CASH PRIZE**

FOR THE BEST MUSICAL COMPOSITION  
ARRANGED TO PLAY ON THE

## "Dolceola"

We will pay \$100.00 in cash to the person sending to us, prior to Christmas, Dec. 25th, 1905, the best musical composition arranged to play on the DOLCEOLA.

In order that you may see just what arrangement is necessary for the DOLCEOLA, we will send you, free, our illustrated book, "THE DOLCEOLA," which fully describes the instrument and key board, and also give you all necessary information so you can compete intelligently for this \$100.00 prize. Every contestant will receive a handsome souvenir, even if they don't win the big prize, and every composition which we retain we will pay a liberal price for.

Write us to-day, for it costs you nothing, and, at least, you will get a handsome souvenir.

This new instrument is equal in tone volume to two guitars and two mandolins, while it is played with keys like the piano.

The great simplicity with which the novice can produce sweet music is the DOLCEOLA'S greatest charm. For children's use it is a most charming and economical stepping-stone to the piano, and will tend to develop in the child God's most exquisite gift—music.

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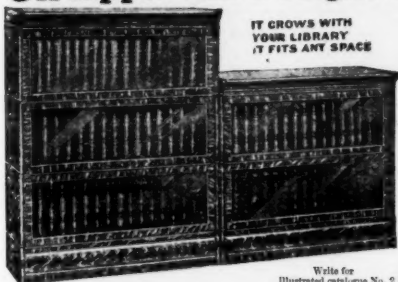
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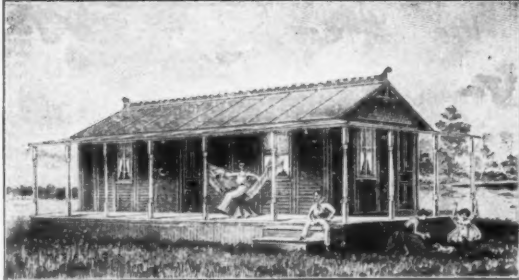
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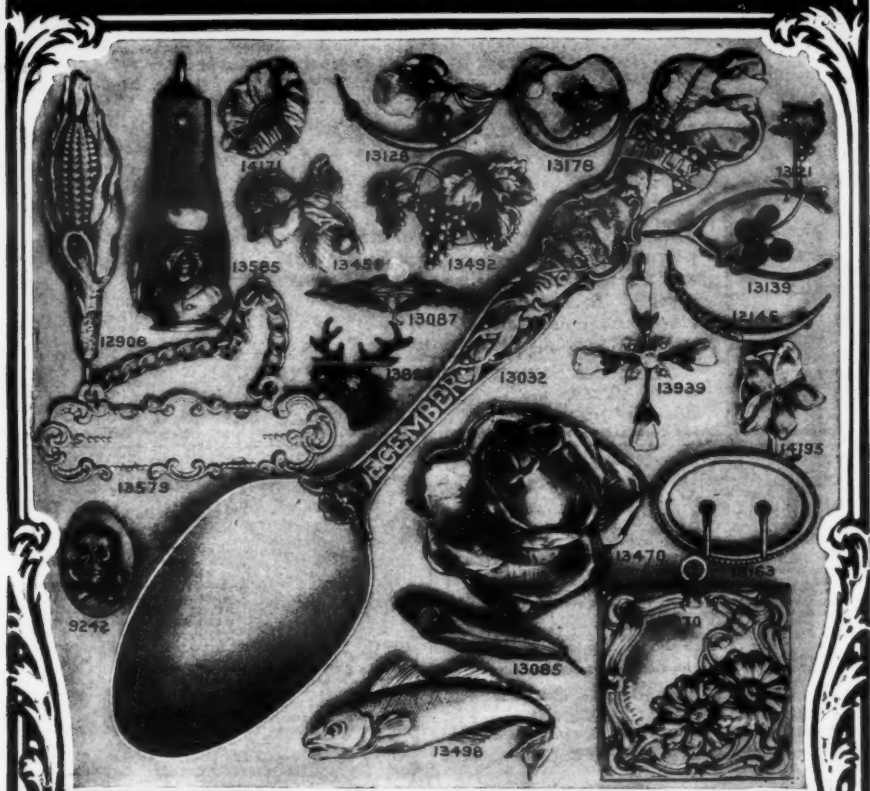
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November 2, 1905.

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C/o Ainslee's Magazine, City.

Dear Mr. Brown:

You know we had a half page in Ainslee's for September, and, with great reluctance on the part of the writer, used a half page in the Popular for October. Under the circumstances it is only fair to you to say that on our strictly traceable advertising, the record of which we have only just completed, Ainslee's proved to be the very best of all the magazines that we used (a list of nearly twenty) and the Popular Magazine ran so close to Ainslee's that there is hardly any difference between the two publications in the cost of replies. The page we have in Ainslee's for November is exceeding this record more than twice over, and you shall have a page for the Popular for December, which is quite a distinction, by the way, as it is our intention not to use any other publications that month, owing to pressure of business.

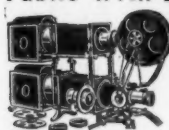
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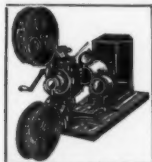
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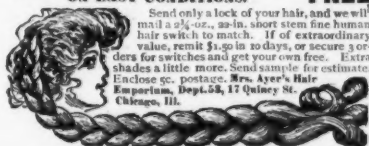


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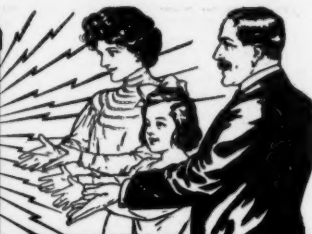
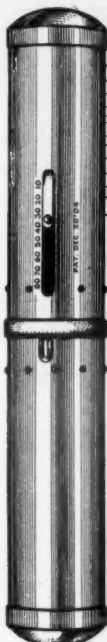
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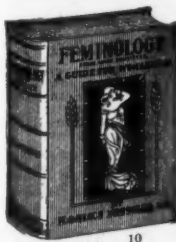
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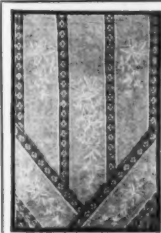
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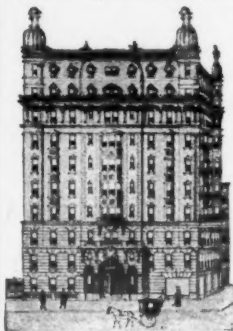
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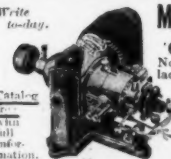
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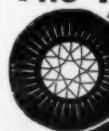
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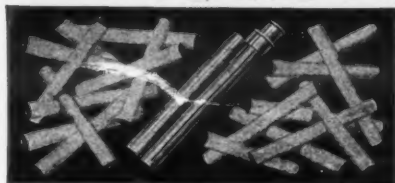
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Beware of Imitators. Cage and Bird's inside wing must be stamped with my registered, trade mark "Living-Music-Box," or not genuine.

Fort Scott, Kan., 5-10-05.  
Your G-Andreasberg-Roller is the finest singer I ever heard. It will surely drive away any one's troubles. I can recommend them to any one wishing a good singer.

MRS. C. E. GARRISON.

Large Illustrated Catalogue, Booklet and Testimonials are free.

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Largest Mail Order Bird Store in the World. Estab. 1885.



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## Rain-Proof Coat

**\$10.00**

WE have these coats made to our special order. Have sold hundreds of them this season. The picture simply does justice to the style of this garment. It has six box plaits in back, full belt; neck and cuffs overlaid with silk vantage braid. Material is the hairline worsted in olive, Oxford and castor shades. There is not a month in the year when a rain-proof coat is not a necessity to some extent. A woman's wardrobe is not complete without one. The garment pictured in this ad, is guaranteed to give complete satisfaction. Sizes 34 to 42.

ORDER No. 120

**Price, \$10.00**

Complete Catalogue of Fall and Winter Fashions in Ladies' Wearing Apparel and various lines of Holiday Goods, sent free on request.

**Pardridge & Blackwell**

Woodward and Michigan  
DETROIT, MICH.



## HAIR GOODS

**PERFECT WIGS FOR LADIES FITTING POMPADOURS, WAVY SWITCHES.**  
\$3.00 Up. Complexion Beautifiers.

Illustrated Catalog Free.

We are the largest Hair and Toilet Goods Mfg. in the World

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Then let us send you Polk Miller's celebrated Book on Dogs; How to Take Care of Them; the eloquent Senator Vest's masterful Tribute to a Dog, and "A Yellow Dog's Love for a Nigger" (famous poem). We will send you all of the above for 10c just to advertise Sergeant's Famous Dog Remedies. Address **POLK MILLER DRUG CO.** 808 Main St. Richmond, Va.

## Press Your Trousers While You Sleep



by using the

## Perfect Pants Presser

Puts in the "crease" (takes out the "Bag") Keeps trousers in perfect order by placing them in press on retiring; by morning they will have that well-pressed, fresh appearance, with a regular "tailor's" crease, no matter how wet, baggy or out of shape. The cost is saved many times a year, and provides a continuously neat appearance. This is the day of the good dresser. Send for a Perfect Pants Presser, use it 60 days, money returned if unsatisfactory. Circular and full information on request.

Plain Wood, Mahogany stain, Japan trim.....\$5.50  
Veneered boards, Oxidized Copper trim, natural finish.....\$5.00  
An ideal Christmas present.

**PERFECT PANTS PRESSER CO.**  
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For sale by: New York City, Lewis & Conger; San Francisco, Palace Hardware Co.; Boston, Mass., Wm. H. Richardson & Co.; Pittsburg, Pa., J. B. Kaercher; Chicago, Marshall Field & Co.



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Mrs. J. W. Dale, of N. H., made **\$107.65** in three weeks and did her own work.

**\$63.70** in 12 days by a college student who paid his way through college selling our pens.

**\$12.30** For the first day's work by Walter H. Keston, of Minn.

Over 800 men and women are making from \$15 to \$50 weekly in this pleasant work. You can do the same. Our terms are very liberal. No Novelty in the history of the Agency or Mail Order business has met with such instantaneous success as the **Autofiller Self-Filling-Cleaning Fountain Pen**. Fills and cleans itself instantly. No glass dropper. No leaky joints. No ink fingers. No complicated parts. Absolutely perfect feel. No-ink blots. Always ready to write. Uses any ink. Complete catalogue and terms, together with instructions and suggestions in salesmanship enabling any alert man or woman to increase his income from 20 to 100% selling our pens, sent free upon request. Experience unnecessary. Be sure and write us today for full particulars and proofs.

We want live hustling agents and managers everywhere.

**THE AUTOFILLER PEN CO.,**  
910 Jefferson Ave.,  
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Do you receive satisfactory returns from your property?  
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Correspondence solicited. Absolutely no charge unless sale is effected. Send me exact location and I will quickly submit a cash offer.

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**INVESTOR'S REVIEW, 1347 Galt Bldg., CHICAGO, ILL.**



# DIAMONDS

ON  
OPEN ACCOUNT

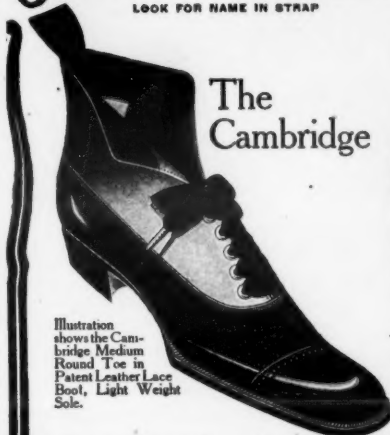
OUR offer is open to all merchants with good rating and also to individuals holding responsible positions. To such we will send Diamond Rings like cut, C. O. D. \$60, subject to examination. Balance may be paid in 90 days, 25% off; 60 days, 25% off, or in 90 days net. Our Catalog No. W18 will interest you. Send for it.

*P. H. Chester Frost & Co.*  
EST. 1881

DIAMOND IMPORTERS  
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# The Florsheim SHOE

LOOK FOR NAME IN STRAP



The  
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Illustration shows the Cambridge Medium Round Toe in Patent Leather Lace Boot, Light Weight Sole.

Conservative gentlemen find it difficult to select suitable shoes among the extreme styles so prevalent to-day. The Cambridge has been especially designed for this class of men. Appropriate for any purpose or requirement. The neatness and refinement of the Cambridge are unexcelled.

Style Book shows "a fit for every foot." Send for it.  
Most styles sell for \$5.00

**Florsheim & Company**  
CHICAGO, U. S. A.

## FOR CHRISTMAS

Get Your Husband, Son or Brother, a

### PAN-TOG



A dressing chair for gentlemen. Trousers pressed and creased over night, simply by placing between panels. 500 pounds pressure does it. An improved hanger keeps coat and vest from wrinkling.

There's a handy place for shoes or slippers. A low seat insures easy position when lacing shoes. A handsome piece of furniture; quartered oak, golden finish or mahoganyized birch. Saves its cost in six months and will last a life-time. **Price only \$12.50**

Freight prepaid to any point in the U. S.  
Write for descriptive folder.

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**P**IANO excellence is synonymous with the name *Knabe*.

To own a *Knabe* is to be the possessor of the world's best piano.

The prominent piano dealer of each city or town in the United States and Canada will tell you why this is so.

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TAMPA, FLA.

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Original cost of this magnificent hostelry over \$3,000,000.00.

Absolutely fireproof—built of concrete, brick and steel.

Recently leased by strong hotel company and will be managed by men of wide hotel experience.

A large sum has been expended in renovating and refitting what was already the greatest resort hotel in Florida.

Automobile rides to Ybor City, with its famous Spanish restaurants, theatres and dance halls.

Tampa Bay Hotel reached by Seaboard Air Line Railway and short automobile transfer—the shortest and quickest route from the East.

For further information apply to

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the best cuts of beef are in

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Fine  
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This beau-  
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basket, \$7.50.

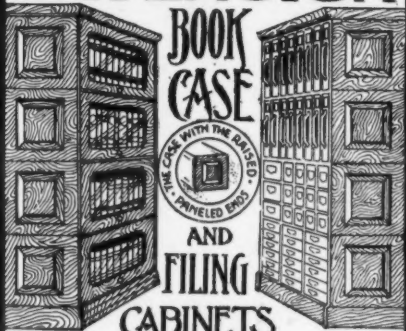
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china and cut glass, let us  
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**WEST 21st and WEST 22d Streets**  
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**"VILAS"**  
**EXTENSION**

**BOOK  
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FILING  
CABINETS**



Has points of advantage worth investigating.

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**JAP-A-LAC**

is the best varnish for  
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**CHAIRS, Tables, Furni-  
ture of all kinds, Stairways,  
Oil-Cloth or Linoleum,  
Floors, Weather-beaten  
Front Doors and all Interior  
Woodwork. Produces a hard, lustrous finish that  
"wears like iron." For sale by all paint dealers.**

Write today for color card showing 13 colors, and  
instructive booklet describing the many uses for  
JAP-A-LAC.

If your dealer does not keep JAP-A-LAC send us his name  
and ten cents to cover cost of mailing, and we will send a  
FREE SAMPLE (quarter pint can) to any point in the  
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**THE Glidden  
VARNISH CO.**  
Address Dept. J.C.  
140 Williamson Bldg.  
CLEVELAND, OHIO

# A California Christmas

There is no better gift in all the wide range of Yule-tide joys than a California Christmas day—a day out-of-doors without wraps or furs, without frost or snow.

Wouldn't you exchange the chilly rawness of an eastern winter day for the blue sky and sunshine, the fruit, flowers and birds of that bright land?

It is easily, quickly and comfortably done by the Rock Island's

## Golden State Limited

The three-day train—evening departure—from Chicago and St. Louis to Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Runs over most southerly route, quickest to reach the realm of summer. Everything to make the journey comfortable and pleasurable.

The Rock Island has a second well-equipped daily train running over southern route—morning departure from both Chicago and St. Louis.

Let us send you our new California Train Book and 1905 edition of "The Golden State."

Write to-day, enclosing six cents in stamps.



JNO. SEBASTIAN,  
Passenger Traffic Manager,  
Room 707 La Salle Station,  
CHICAGO.



*Christmas Morning on the Lawn.*



## "Saint Cecelia," the Patron Saint of Music

- ¶ Are you bringing up your children with a proper love of music?  
¶ The interpretation of this, God's most exquisite gift, are truly marvelous by the

**New Mechanically Fed .**

# Talk-o-phone

This is the only reproducing machine for disc records on which the needle is mechanically moved across the record and on which this motion is not dependent upon the needle. This absolutely kills that awful scratching sound and produces a pure clear tone. This new device makes it impossible to scratch the needle across the record and thus damage it. It is a great record saving device, increasing the life of the record 100%. Adjustable to operate all disc records of different sound waves.


¶ Every little touch of expression, every artistic phrasing of the world's best artists is unimpaired in their rendition by this master-piece of mechanical ingenuity. The new mechanically fed **Talk-o-phone** reproduces all good disc records and absolutely free them from any scratching or grinding noise. To appreciate how perfectly natural are the reproductions by the **Talk-o-phone**, one must hear it.

**Talk-o-phones, \$18.00 to \$50.00**

- ¶ They cost no more than other disc machines that depend upon the old scratching feed.  
¶ We send you **free** our handsome book telling just why the new mechanically fed **Talk-o-phone** is superior to other reproducing machines.  
¶ Send us your name and we will advise you where you can hear the new mechanically fed **Talk-o-phone** and also send you free, our booklet.

**TALK-O-PHONE CO., 15 Ann Street,  
TOLEDO, OHIO.**

# PINEHURST



## NORTH CAROLINA

**The Leading Health and Recreation Resort of the South**  
18 Hours from New York.

**Pinehurst** is located in a center of a region which scientists have proved has more natural tonic or ozone than any section east of Colorado. It has **FOUR HOTELS** under one general management, with prices varying from \$2.50 per day upwards. **FIFTY-TWO COTTAGES**, and a splendid **PREPARATORY SCHOOL** under the direction of Mr. A. G. Warren, Head Master.

**The Two Best Golf Courses in the South, and Country Club** make Pinehurst the Winter Golfing Center of the United States. Frequent tournaments.

**35,000 Acre Shooting Preserve** for the exclusive use of patrons of Pinehurst. Trained dogs, guides, and shooting wagons at reasonable charges. Best quail shooting in North Carolina.

**Tennis Courts**  
Six fine Tennis Courts afford full opportunity for playing under best conditions. Frequent tournaments.

**Saddle Horses**  
A large livery of gaited saddle horses is maintained and an instructor in riding is at Pinehurst during the season.

**Pinehurst's** sanitary conditions are absolutely perfect and are under expert supervision. **Pinehurst** is the only resort in America which absolutely excludes consumptives.

Through Pullman Service via Seaboard Air Line or Southern Railway. Only one night out from New York, Boston and Cincinnati. An exquisite book, with fac-similes of water-color sketches illustrating the out-of-door features of Pinehurst, will be sent on application.

**Address, PINEHURST OFFICE,**  
**Leonard Tufts, Owner, Boston, Mass. PINEHURST, NORTH CAROLINA.**





# ED. PINAUD'S

PERFUME

EAU DE  
QUININE  
HAIR TONIC

ELIXIR  
DENTIFRICE



ED. PINAUD'S Perfume, the exquisite, the fashionable.

ED. PINAUD'S Eau de Quinine Hair Tonic, the most famous toilet preparation in the world—makes the hair more beautiful, more lustrous, cleanses the scalp of dandruff. Used and endorsed the world over by people of good breeding and refinement.

ED. PINAUD'S Elixir Dentifrice, the most perfect preparation for whitening and preserving the teeth.

**FREE** ED. PINAUD'S Eau de Quinine Hair Tonic for three applications; ED. PINAUD'S exquisite perfume for five times, and the famous ELIXIR DENTIFRICE for five times. Send 10c. to pay postage and packing.

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ED. PINAUD'S American Offices

ED. PINAUD Bldg., Room 106, New York City

## We Are Selling

**XMAS  
TREE  
LIGHTS  
WITH  
BATTERY  
\$3 UP**



Toy Electric Railways, \$3 to . . .	\$60.00
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Electric Books, 10c. to . . . . .	5.00
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Battery Table Lamps, \$3 to . . . .	10.00
Carriage and Bicycle Lights, \$3 to .	6.00
Lanterns and Pocket Lights, 75c. to	3.00
Battery Motors and Fans, \$1 to . .	12.00
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We undersell all. Cat. free. Want Agents.

**OHIO ELECTRIC WORKS, CLEVELAND, OHIO**

This Book

**FREE**

Don't wait—  
write for it  
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Tells  
how to  
beautify  
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home at  
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Discriminating,  
home-loving persons are enthusiastic in their praise of our new book.

Consult this  
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save time,  
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This new book 'The Proper Treatment for Floors, Woodwork and Furniture,' tells all about wood, wood-cleaning, finishing and polishing. Sent **FREE** by manufacturers of

## Johnson's Prepared Wax

"A Complete Finish and Polish for All Wood"

**For Floors, Woodwork and Furniture**

Produces lasting, artistic, sanitary finish to which dust and dirt will not adhere. Will not crack, blister, peel off, show laps, scratches or heel marks. Johnson's Wax is far superior to any other, one reason is that it contains the most polishing wax to the pound. Fine for preserving and polishing oil-cloth and linoleum.

Johnson's Prepared Wax is sold by all dealers in paint— $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. can, 30 cents; 1 and 2 lb. cans, 60 cents per pound; 4.5 and 8 lb. cans, 50 cents per pound.

Write today for book and mention edition A12. Don't forget the label, either.

**S. C. JOHNSON & SON, Racine, Wis.**

"The Wood-Finishing Authorities"



**Johnson's  
Polishing Mitt  
For Use on  
Furniture and Woodwork  
FREE**

for label from 1 lb. or larger can of Johnson's Prepared Wax.  
To remove label place can in hot water or steam.

# Ainslee's Magazine

"THE MAGAZINE THAT ENTERTAINS"

## FOR JANUARY

will be an especially strong number, even better than December's. Like every issue of AINSLEE'S MAGAZINE, it will contain the very best material—stories, essays, poems—that it has been possible to secure up to the time of going to press. We have no unworthy matter to work off, sandwiched in, possibly, between strong features. If there is any doubt in the minds of the publishers as to the eligibility of story, poem or essay, it is promptly rejected.



### EDITH WHARTON'S "THE INTRODUCERS,"

perhaps the most noteworthy feature of the January number, is the latest story by the author of "The House of Mirth," and one of her best.

### EDGAR SALTUS' "VANITY SQUARE"

is a novelette dealing with New York society. There is a vein of mystery running through it which is sustained to the very end. Mr. Saltus has never written a better story.

### MARGARET SUTTON BRISCOE'S "MADEMOISELLE CRAPAUD"

is a short story of unusual beauty. It tells of the strange friendship between a man and an imaginative little girl, and how the game they played affected her whole future.

Other interesting features in this issue will be "The Rose of the Marquise," a stirring tale of old France, by Catherine Thayer; "A Practical Joke," a story of strong emotional interest, by Frederic Johnston; "The Trespasser," an amusing little story of the West, by B. M. Bower; "A Matter of Inches," a clever character study, by Johnson Morton; "The Republic of Susan B.," a humorous tale, by Ellis Parker Butler, and "The Integrity of Miss Ascher," by Frances Wilson. There will also be another of Anne O'Hagan's immensely entertaining "Ellen Berwick" stories, in which are depicted the experiences of a young woman who comes to New York and goes into business; another of Mrs. Wilson Woodrow's delightful "Conversations with Egeria," and the first of a very notable series of essays dealing with "Society as a Merry-go-round"—in this case "The Hangers-on"—by Mary Manners. Robert Stewart has a charming essay on "Riverside Drive," and Alan Dale tells of the doings of the theatrical world. There are the usual complement of poems, and the department "For Booklovers."



Here's  
What We Do

21  
Kinds

For the Housekeeper in Soup-making :  
We wipe out the disagreeable features ;  
Not just several, but all.  
Think it over : No marketing, no bother, no preparation in

# Campbell's SOUPS

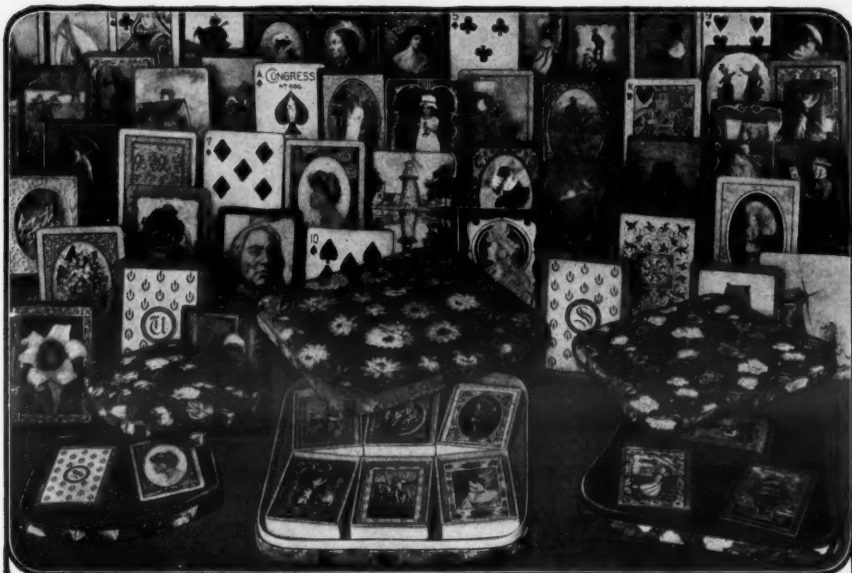
We do all these things with perfect system and absolute cleanliness ;  
With high-grade skill ;  
With high-grade material ;  
With high-grade attention to detail.  
Under such conditions, what do you get ?  
The best, in every particular, in conscientious condensation.  
And all you have to do is as simple as breathing—

"Just add a can of  
hot water and serve"



Joseph Campbell Company,  
24-44 River Street,  
Camden, N. J., U. S. A.

Little Jack Horner sat in a corner,  
Having the grandest time  
With the finest treat that a boy could eat,  
And it only cost a dime.



Designs copyright, 1899-1900-1-2-3-4-5 by The U. S. Playing Card Co.

## Playing Cards as Gifts

People who play cards would derive genuine pleasure from one of our fancy holiday boxes filled with

# Congress Playing Cards

These attractive boxes contain assortments of our most popular designs—you may select the backs if you wish. Removable card trays make boxes useful for other purposes. Any one of these boxes makes a "Merry Christmas," combining the holiday spirit with an article of use and enjoyment. Just the thing for card party prizes. Prices: box containing 2 packs, \$1.25; 3 packs, \$1.75; 6 packs, \$3.50. Sent prepaid if your dealer does not supply you.

Write for samples (single cards) and you will understand *why* Congress cards are so popular for card parties, at well-appointed clubs and for home use. Samples are free.

Congress backs are exquisite in coloring. The faces are clearly printed; the corner indexes large. The cards are perfect in manufacture; edged with pure burnished gold leaf.

But *play* with them—there's the *great* fascination of Congress Cards. Their ivory smoothness, their crispness and *snap* gets into the players' fingers—doubles the zest of the game.

Over 100 designs to choose from—all in gold and rich colors—including

**Pictorial Series**—Reproductions of best pictures of American and European artists.

**Initial Series**—The newest and most exclusive. All letters of the alphabet.

**Club Series**—For Whist, Poker, Euchre, etc. Cards of quality in set pattern designs.

Send 50 cents per pack for backs desired. Illustrations and Sample Card free.

**DUPLICATE WHIST**—best of card games, in which skill—not luck—wins. Played with Paine's Duplicate Whist Trays—12-Tray set \$5.00; extra fine set \$10.00. 3 months' course of Whist Lessons free with each set.

**Card Games and How to Play Them**, 160 pages; **Entertaining with Cards**, 64 pages; **Whist and Duplicate Whist**, 104 pages, each, paper, 15 cents; cloth, 25 cents. **Vest Pocket Editions**—Cinch or High Five, Hearts, Skat, Pinochle, Poker, Bridge, Euchre, Fan Tan, Five Hundred, each, paper, 5 cents; cloth, 10 cents.

**Address Dept. 17**

**The U. S. Playing Card Co., Cincinnati, U. S. A.**

Makers also of "Bicycle Playing Cards." Popular price—conventional designs, for everyday use. Fine dealing and wearing qualities. Sold by dealers, or send 25 cents a pack for designs wanted. Illustrations sent free.

We send above goods, prepaid, on receipt of prices named in this advertisement if your dealer does not supply them.



## "WORTH LOOKING INTO"

is the marvelous little **Gillette Safety Razor**. A unique and practical device made for the *comfort* of men who shave. Its friends are *legion* and its success is *phenomenal*. Hundreds of thousands in use. It's a real pleasure to give a "Gillette" to a friend who shaves, for his *pleasure and comfort* will be like the "Gillette" itself—*everlasting*.

**STANDARD SET—TRIPLE SILVER-PLATED HOLDER**  
**SPECIAL SET—QUADRUPLE GOLD-PLATED HOLDER**  
*In Velvet-Lined Cases*

Either one of the above makes an

## IDEAL HOLIDAY GIFT



Exact size of a Gillette blade.

Each Razor Set has 12 thin, flexible, highly tempered, and keen double-edged blades. These blades are sharpened and ground by a secret process.

**12 NEW DOUBLE-EDGED BLADES, \$1.00**

24 Sharp Edges. Each Blade giving from 20 to 40 Smooth and Delightful Shaves.

**NO HONING—NO STROPPING**

Ask your dealer for the "Gillette." *Accept no substitute.* He can procure it for you.

**WARNING!** The Gillette Patent No. 775,134 covers all razors having a thin detachable blade *requiring* means for holding and stiffening, but not *requiring* stropping or honing by the user. *Beware of infringements.*

Write to-day for our interesting booklet which explains our **30-day Free Trial Offer**. Most dealers make this offer; if yours does not, we will.

GILLETTE SALES COMPANY, 1155 Times Building, 42d St. and Broadway, New York



# Gillette Safety Razor



Whether  
You Buy  
Cigars  
To Give  
or  
To Smoke  
LA RECLAMA  
CIGARS  
will Please



## JUST THE THING FOR A SMOKER

### An Appropriate Gift or Forfeit

**"SOUVENIR BOX"** —50 La Reclama Cigars Four Shapes in sealed packages. Attractively packed ready for presentation. **\$2.50**  
Prepaid to any point in the U. S.

For Birthday, Wedding or Anniversary Gift; as a Forfeit, Favor or Prize at a Dinner Party, House Warming, Euchre. Nothing will so satisfactorily **meet the want**.  
Here is a gift that you can bestow with the fullest assurance that they will please the taste of the most exciting smoker.

### 50 PLEASANT REMINDERS OF THE GIVER

This Souvenir Box is a special package for the holiday and Gift Season. Fifty La Reclama Cigars, assortment of four different sizes attractively put up in sealed packages. Every one is guaranteed select and high grade Clear Havana of the same high quality as our celebrated "Examiner" cigars that have pleased thousands of knowing smokers in every portion of the land.

Any Clear Havana smoker in this land can obtain direct from our factory **better** cigars for the **same** money or the **same** cigars for **less** money than from any other source.

La Reclama Cigars are the richest, sweetest smoke in the world. Every cigar is **Clear Havana** of the **most select quality grown**. They are of unvarying quality. They combine at once a most delicious **natural** flavor and aroma, smoke freely with a firm ash.

Our "From Factory to Consumer" plan saves you jobbers', salesman's, retailers and all middlemen's profits—a saving of half.

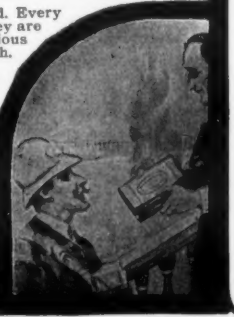
Surely if this is true you're interested. Let us prove it.

Send for our "Smokers' Guide and Chart" showing 30 different styles of Clear Havanas at money-saving prices. **\$4 to \$15** per hundred.

**LA RECLAMA CUBAN FACTORY,**

1893 First Avenue, New York City.

Established 1875. Refer: Union Exch. Bank,  
Fifth Ave., New York; Dun, Bradstreets.





# ABSOLUTELY PURE HAYNER WHISKEY

**4 FULL QUARTS \$3.20 EXPRESS PREPAID**

**Direct from our distillery to YOU**

The perfect purity of HAYNER WHISKEY is guaranteed because it goes direct to you from our own distillery and doesn't pass through the hands of any dealer or middleman to adulterate. You're sure it's pure.

When you buy HAYNER WHISKEY you save the dealers' enormous profits. That's why it costs you less than you pay them for adulterated stuff. You cannot buy anything purer, better or more satisfactory than HAYNER WHISKEY, no matter how much you pay.

It is recommended by leading physicians and used in hospitals because it is so good and pure. That's why YOU should try it.

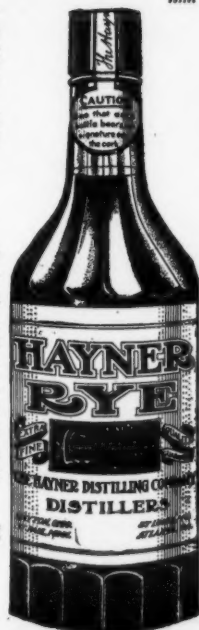
## OUR OFFER

We will ship you, in a plain sealed case with no marks to show contents, **FOUR FULL QUART BOTTLES** of HAYNER WHISKEY, either RYE or BOURBON, for \$3.20, and we will pay express charges. Try it, have your doctor test it, every bottle if you wish. Then, if you don't find it the purest and best whiskey you ever tasted and are not perfectly satisfied, ship it back to us at our expense and your \$3.20 will be promptly refunded. Doesn't such a guarantee, backed by a company that has been in business for 40 years and has a paid up capital of \$500,000.00, protect you fully? How could any offer be fairer? The expense is all ours if you're not satisfied.

Orders for Ariz., Cal., Col., Idaho, Mont., Nev., N. Mex., Ore., Utah, Wash., or Wyo., must be on the basis of 4 Quarts for \$4.00 by Express Prepaid or 20 Quarts for \$15.20 by Freight Prepaid. Write our nearest office TO-DAY

### THE HAYNER DISTILLING COMPANY

DAYTON, OHIO, ST. LOUIS, MO., ST. PAUL, MINN., ATLANTA, GA.  
DISTILLERY, TROY, OHIO. ESTABLISHED 1866. CAPITAL \$500,000.00.



# Pears' soap.



*Painted by Sir John E. Millais, Bart. R.A.*

Pears' Soap beautifies the complexion,  
keeps the hands white and imparts a  
constant bloom of freshness to the skin.

Pears' Annual for 1905 with 117 illustrations and three large Presentation Plates. The best Annual published—without any doubt. However, judge for yourself.  
Agents: The International News Company.

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When writing to advertisers please mention Ainslee's



THE DELICIOUS DENTIFRICE



# RUBIFOAM

JUST LIKE PEARLS  
PURE • WHITE • SPARKLING

Giving to beauty an irresistible charm, are the teeth which have been preserved and beautified with **RUBIFOAM** the cleansing, pearl-making dentifrice.

**IT'S WISE TO USE RUBIFOAM**

25 cents at druggists. Sample free  
Address, E. W. HORT & CO., Lowell, Mass.

*Hasn't scratched yet!!!*

REGISTERED 1901 BY BON AMI CO.



# Bon Ami

A SCOURING SOAP  
A METAL POLISH  
A GLASS CLEANER

*The Best Scouring Soap Made*  
(13 yr's ON THE m'kt.)

## Christmas Cameras



# New Model No. 1 and 1A Folding Pocket Kodaks.

**THEY WORK WITH A SNAPPY PRECISION  
THAT IS A MECHANICAL DELIGHT.**

With a single motion, the front pulls out to the correct focus. In closing, the bed automatically covers the working parts. Equipped with our quiet, jarless Pocket Automatic Shutter, having instantaneous, time and "bulb" action and iris diaphragm stops. Meniscus achromatic lenses of the highest grade.

No. 1 Folding Pocket Kodak, for  $2\frac{1}{4}$  x  $3\frac{3}{4}$  pictures, \$10.00

No. 1A Folding Pocket Kodak, for  $2\frac{1}{2}$  x  $4\frac{1}{4}$  pictures, 12.00

EASTMAN KODAK CO.

*Catalogues free at the  
dealers or by mail.*

Rochester, N. Y., *The Kodak City.*